

**VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES
IN THREE EC COUNTRIES**

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I declare that this thesis has been composed
by myself and that this work is my own

In the memory of my father,
a skilled craftsman who combined intuition
and training in an admirably balanced way.

PREFACE

This thesis deals with vocational training policy, an area highlighted by a few seminal works and occasionally explored by sociologists and economists, but more or less neglected by political scientists and policy analysts.

My interest in this topic goes back to 1978 when I joined, as national correspondent, a working group set up by the EC agency based in West Berlin (FRG), the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. The task of the group was to survey and report on innovation and change in continuing education and training in the EC member states. (1) Such a professional occasion prompted my curiosity in training-related issues.

In 1982 I was appointed Education Officer with the Italian Consulate in Edinburgh and this provided an opportunity to contact the University of Edinburgh and to develop my interest.

In June 1982 a conference on "The Politics of Industrial Training" was held in Edinburgh at the European Centre for Government Studies (ECGS). Administrators and scholars from the United Kingdom, France, West Germany and the EC Commission attended. In the months that followed, I met Professor Malcolm Anderson, the convener of the conference, and Mr Neil Fraser, who had taken part in it: the former, Head of the Department of Politics at the University of Edinburgh and Acting Director of the Centre; the latter, lecturer (now senior lecturer) at the Department of Social Administration (now Social Policy and Social Work). Both were interested in supporting and supervising a research

project in this area. The Department of Social Administration was magnanimous in recommending acceptance of my application as a post-graduate student on a part-time basis.

I am greatly indebted to Professor Malcolm Anderson and Neil Fraser, whose unfailing encouragement, understanding and wise guidance in a work of this nature - exploring the unforeseeable avenues of scientific investigation - have been invaluable.

Although I am still far from being familiar with the subtleties of the English language, my English has improved thanks to the patient and accurate assistance Neil Fraser offered me and to the time generously afforded by Alison Harold and Joe Casciani.

I also appreciate the kind understanding shown by Dr Pietro Lonardo and Dr Carlo Marsili, Italian Consul Generals in Scotland during my research work.

Finally, my sincere and heartfelt thanks go to Gabriella and Tancredi, my wife and my son, for having so rarely objected to my time-consuming interest.

(1) Cfr European Centre for the Improvement of Vocational Training, Formation Continue. Recueil d'activités innovatrices dans les pays de la CEE, Berlin, 1979.

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a cross-national study of vocational training; it examines the fundamental features of the policy process. The construction of vocational training policies is analysed with respect to those pursued in France, Italy and the United Kingdom and to the EC "Common Vocational Training Policy".

A pattern of policy development - national parallel actions - is identified and illustrated through a case study of youth training programmes in the 1970's in the above three countries. The role of the EC in this context is investigated.

(Informant technique was employed in the fieldwork).

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ABBREVIATIONS

General

- BAA : BundesAnstalt für Arbeit (Federal Employment Institute)
 BIBB : BundesInstitut für BerufsBildungsForschung (Federal Institute for Research on Vocational Training)
 BIT : Bureau International du Travail (International Labour Office)
 EMP : Member of the European Parliament
 IIM : International Institute of Management
 IMF : International Monetary Fund
 OECD : Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

France

- ADEP : Agence pour le Développement de l'Education Permanente (Agency for the Development of Lifelong Education)
 AFPA : Association pour la Formation Professionnelle des Adultes (Association for the Vocational Training of Adults)
 ANPE : Agence Nationale pour l'Emploi (National Agency for Employment)
 ASFO : Association pour la Formation (Association for Training)
 CEREP : Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (Centre for the Study and Research on Qualifications)
 CFDT : Confédération Française Démocratique des Travailleurs (French Trade Union)
 CGT : Confédération Générale du Travail (French Communist Trade Union)
 CNPF : Conseil National du Patronat Français (French Employers National Association)
 FO : Force Ouvrière (French Socialist Trade Union)
 GRETA : Groupements d'Etablissements pour la Formation Continue (Association of Educational Institutions)
 INFFO : Centre pour le Développement de l'Information sur la Formation (Centre for the Development of Information about Continuing Training)

INSEE: Institut National de Statistique
 IUT : Institut Universitaire de Technologie (French Polytechnics)
 JOC : Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne (Christian Young Workers)
 LEP : Lycée d'Etudes Professionnelles (Technical School)
 LEST : Laboratoire d'Economie et de Sociologie du Travail (Centre of Sociology of Work)
 ONISEP: Office National d'Information pour les Enseignants et les Professions (National Information Office for Teachers and Professions)
 PCF : Partie Communiste Français (French Communist Party)
 SMIC : Salaire Minimum Interprofessionnelle de Croissance (Minimum Wage)

Italy

CENSIS: Centro Studi ed Investimenti Sociali (Centre for Research and Social Investment)
 CGIL : Confederazione Generale Italiana Lavoratori (Italian General Confederation of Labour)
 CFL : Contratto di formazione e lavoro (Employment and Training Contract)
 CIG : Cassa Integrazione Guadagni (Wage Integration Fund)
 CISL : Confederazione Italiana Sindacati Lavoratori (Italian Confederation of Labour Unions)
 CNEL : Consiglio Nazionale dell'Economia e del Lavoro (National Council for the Economy and Labour)
 CONFINDUSTRIA:
 Confederazione dell'Industria Italiana (Confederation of Italian Industry)
 ENAIP: Ente Nazionale ACLI per l'Istruzione Professionale (National Institute for Vocational Training)
 ENI : Ente Nazionale Idrocarburi (State-owned company)
 FEDERMECCANICA:
 Federazione delle Industrie Meccaniche (Federation of Mechanical Engineering Industry)
 FGCI : Federazione Giovanile Comunisti Italiani (Italian Federation of Communist Youth)
 FLM : Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici (Federation of Workers in the Engineering Industry)
 FORMEZ: Centro di Studi e Formazione per il Mezzogiorno (Centre for Training and Research in Southern Italy)
 ISFOL: Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori (Institute for the Development of Vocational Training)

ISRIL: Istituto di Studi sulle Relazione Industriali e del Lavoro (Institute for Research on Industrial and Work Relations)
 ISTAT: Istituto Centrale di Statistica (National Statistical Office)
 ISVET: Istituto di Ricerca sullo Sviluppo Economico e Tecnico (Institute for Research on Economic Development and Technical Progress)
 MPI : Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione (Ministry of Education)
 PCI : Partito Comunista Italiano (Italian Communist Party)
 PSI : Partito Socialista Italiano (Italian Socialist Party)
 UIL : Unione Italiana del Lavoro (Italian Labour Union)

United Kingdom

ATTI : Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions
 BACIE : British Association for Commercial and Industrial Education
 BYC : British Youth Council
 CBI : Confederation of British Industry
 CITB : Construction Industry Training Board
 CPRS : Confederation of British Industry
 DE : Department of Employment
 DES : Department of Education and Science
 EITB : Engineering Industrial Training Board
 ESA : Employment Service Agency
 ICO : Institute of Careers Officers
 ITB : Industrial Training Board
 IMS : Institute of Manpower Studies
 JCP : Job Creation Programme
 MSC : Manpower Service Commission
 NATFHE: National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
 NAHT : National Association of Headteachers
 NTY : New Training Initiative
 RoLSA : Raising of Leaving School Age
 RPRITB: Rubber Plastics Reprocessing Industry Training Board
 RSSL : Recruitment Subsidy for School Leavers
 TSA : Training Service Agency
 TUC : Trades Union Congress
 TURU : Trades Union Research Unit
 UVP : Unified Vocational Preparation
 WEEP : Work Experience Programme on Employer's Premises
 WEP : Work Experience Programme
 WOC : Wide Opportunities Courses
 YES : Youth Employment Subsidy
 YOP : Youth Opportunities Programme
 YTS : Youth Training Scheme

European Community

ACVT : Advisory Committee on Vocational Training
CAP : Common Agricultural Policy
CEDEFOP: Centre Européen pour le Développement de la
Formation Professionnelle (European Centre for
the Development of Vocational Training)
DGV : Directorate General V
EAGGF: European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund
ECU : European Currency Unit
EP : European Parliament
ESC : Economic and Social Committee
ESF : European Social Fund
ETUC : European Trade Union Confederation
ETUI : European Trade Union Information
European Centre: European Centre for the Development of
Vocational Training
MISEP: Mutual Information System on Employment Policies
SCE : Standing Committee on Employment
SEDOC: Système Européen de Diffusion des Offres et
Demandes d'Emploi enregistré en Compensation
internationale (European System for the
International Clearing of Vacancies and
Application for Employment)
UNICE: Union of Industries of the EC

CHAPTER ONE

A STUDY OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES - AN INTRODUCTION

1.1 AIMS OF THE THESIS

This thesis is about vocational training in the European Community (EC). There are problems with the phrase 'vocational training'. Its definition varies. However, the term is widely used in the literature. Here it will be used in the broad sense of "all activities in or out of school designed to contribute to occupational proficiency" (Page and Thomas, 1977:60) (1). It will be considered as a framework for what is meant in the United Kingdom by 'industrial training', 'vocational preparation', and 'work experience', in France by "formation professionnelle", in Italy by "formazione professionale", and in the Federal Republic of Germany by 'Berufsausbildung'. The problem of the definition will be dealt in the course of the thesis (Chapter Two: Sect.s 1 and 2; Chapter Five: Sect.5.4; Chapter Six: Sect.6.1; Chapter Seven: Sect.7.1)

Unfortunately, vocational training is not a well-explored topic of research and the available knowledge is poorly substantiated and largely fragmented. A few scholars have, however, shown interest in it. Historians of education (Artz, 1966), sociologists (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970; Lee, 1972; 1979; Offe, 1977; Maurice, Sorge and Warner, 1979) economists (Becker, 1964; Blaug, 1972; Ryan, 1980) and philosophers of education (Peters, 1967; 1973) investigated various aspects of vocational training. There are several reports and studies about the national systems of vocational training (2). Most are restricted to the description of the organisation of training provision. Some also contrast school-based solutions with industry-based patterns.

Stringer and Richardson (1982) and Anderson and Fairley (1983) have carried out seminal works in the analysis of vocational training policies, by studying policy formation in the United Kingdom. The latter in particular, (1983) have indicated some crucial questions relating to training policy. Both contributions have provided suggestions for this thesis whose aims may be stated as follows.

First, the major task of this thesis is to provide a better understanding of vocational training by using the tools of policy science (3). The contribution of this thesis will be to advance some propositions relating to the policy process in this area. The result may be seen as complementary to those already provided by sociological research and economic analysis.

The second aim of this thesis concerns research methods. Particular attention has been devoted to the development of a research model appropriate for cross-national studies which include two levels of policy formation - the national and the international one. These are currently approached separately (4).

While investigating policy formation with an explicit interest in the potential links among national policy processes, we seek to ascertain some of the conditions in which international co-operation works or may work. We consider the practical implications of this study not on the basis of a social engineering pattern of research utilisation but in terms of "intellectual background, concept orientations and empirical generalisations that inform policy" (Weiss, 1977:544).

As a result, this thesis contributes a more systematic background to the large literature of surveys, reports and official documents issued by international organisations or compiled in the framework of

international co-operation. In these contexts outcomes of policy processes are frequently described but the policy process itself is rarely investigated. At the same time the current research differs from other investigations. Studies exist which focus on the structural and institutional aspects of the provision of vocational training and on the links between training and economic, cultural and social factors (Sorge and Warner, 1980). But most of these appear to have a lack of interest in the policy process. In a few (European Centre, 1980a; Daly and Jones, 1980; Maurice, Sellier and Silvestre, 1982) policy processes are taken into account, but mainly as end-products. They are not seen as independent variables. Our investigation reverses the balance and focuses on the making of policies.

1.2 POLICY STUDIES AND POLICY SECTORS

Classic works have investigated the basic theoretical questions that policy studies have to answer within a non-prescriptive approach. According to Lukes's concept of power (1974:25) based on a critical review of previous definitions, the study of policy process may focus on four aspects: [1] the decision process and control over political agenda (not merely through decisions); [2] issues and political issues; [3] observable (overt or covert) and latent conflict; [4] subjective and real interest.

At the level of actual research strategy, the focal object of investigation has shifted over the years from policy formation, i.e. selection of policy goals, to implementation and, more recently, to programme designing (Mayntz, 1983). Several images of the policy process have been depicted (Jordan, 1981) and the configuration of

interest groups (Richardson and Jordan, 1979; Marsh, 1983) has been intensively investigated.

In general terms, policy studies have advanced knowledge in terms of statements and propositions concerning the characteristics of policy-making (Richardson and Jordan, 1979; Ham and Hill, 1982). Most theories and concepts have been developed through the study of specific areas, but with the aim of reaching "universals". It is assumed that policy processes have common features across the areas of action.

In recent years, however, the need to look at the specifics of individual policy sectors has been stressed (Freeman, 1985). Policy segments have been considered not as mere areas for testing hypotheses to be generalised from, but as sectors where processes are peculiar. The assumption here is that the nature and the structure of the issues concerned play a crucial role in determining the policy process. There are reasons for this development. First, the segmentation of the policy process has led scholars to concentrate on individual policy arenas. The analysis of policy-making machineries, and the study of policy communities and issue networks have gradually emphasised problems specific to individual sectors. Second, comparative studies have provided evidence that policy processes may be similar or have commonalities in differing national contexts. Policies are not totally determined by the particularities of a national context, they tend to be designed and to develop according to the issues at stake. Similarly, because of the lack of success of overall theories concerning European integration, policy research on the EC has concentrated on the analysis of policy-making in individual sectors (Chapter Eight: Sect.8.1).

This development has several implications for policy studies. It appears plausible to look for the peculiar features of individual sectors, not necessarily for

theoretical formulations of universal relevance. At the same time universal propositions have to be treated cautiously when dealing with individual policy sectors; furthermore policy recommendations based on universal models may not be appropriate for each individual sector.

This thesis is placed in the context of this development. It assumes that vocational training is a policy sector whose peculiarities need to be investigated and cannot be simply drawn from general theories.

1.3 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A POLICY SECTOR

Vocational training has not held a great appeal, either among policy analysts, or among political scientists. There are several reasons for vocational training being a neglected research field

First, uncertainties linked to conceptual and policy boundaries did not help in identifying a clear-cut field for study. Second, the lack of established and consistent policy machineries prevented developments parallel to those which occurred in education studies. Third, comparative studies had difficulties in defining the area for research.

Moreover, we argue that the structure of vocational training accounted for this neglect. As Anderson and Fairley (1983) have pointed out, vocational training is a complex policy area. Compared with education in schools and health services, vocational training is not administered by a nationally-based bureaucracy but by a number of bodies. Another facet of this area is that training has often been used as "a means to an end more than an end in itself" (Norris and Thomas, 1982:42). Hence the goals pursued by political actors through

training policies are complex. The links between vocational training and other policy sectors are crucial as there is a broader relationship with economic, social and industrial policy.

During the 1970's interest in this field developed. Training issues became part of political agendas (OECD, 1983), at the national and the international levels; relevant decisions in this area were taken by several Governments. An increasing amount of resources was devoted to training and a new wave of an ideology of vocationalism spread among experts and policy-makers (Grubb, 1985). This "training emphasis" (Wedell, 1982) prompted the curiosity of scholars some of whom were political scientists.

In spite of vocational training being linked with other policy sectors, we consider that it is possible, for research purposes, to consider it as a policy sector in itself, i.e. an area for issues and decisions. Courses of action undertaken by Governments and programmes defined and set up support this assumption.

In our delimiting the research field, education or vocational education in schools are excluded, although it is not always possible to hold to this distinction. While studying vocational training it is difficult to ignore other overlapping areas, such as manpower policies. (5)

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In the previous sections we have stated the position of this thesis regarding the chosen approach - study of a policy sector - and the field of research - vocational training -. The systems of vocational training have been

classified (Gregoire, 1967; Drouet, 1968; OECD, 1976:29; 1979b) according to the status of training institutions (private versus public), the type of study (part-time versus full-time) and the setting of training activities (firms versus schools). Two major patterns are currently identified (Lauglo, 1983:294). The first is school-centred and is mainly linked to the diversification of the secondary school along vocational lines; the second is firm-based and is constituted by the apprenticeship system, provides specialised knowledge and skills and is supplemented by part-time schooling. In relation to these two modes there is a great difference among countries in terms of how far policies have favoured school-centred preparation for work or firm-based vocational training. Bearing in mind this diversity we shall address the following questions:

1. What are the fundamental features of the policy process in the area of vocational training? Is it possible to formulate propositions that account for the diversity which exist among countries? Is it possible to analyze the variety of policies among countries in a systematic way?

More specifically the questions are:

1. What are the fundamental decisions that account for structural and institutional variation? Which are the determinants?
2. How do policy-makers perceive and define this policy area? How does policy debate originate and develop? What are the ideological components?
3. To what extent does vocational training relate to other areas of economic, social and industrial policy?
4. What is the configuration of the policy sector? How do training interests relate and what are the processes of compromise and mediation?
5. How is implementation affected by the administrative organisation of public

bureaucracy? What is the impact on training of changes in the administration?

2. Is the policy process inevitably nationally bounded? In spite of its particularistic bonds, can vocational training become an issue at a non-national level? To what extent are there European and international influences on national policy-making? How do these occur? Is there a European dimension in national policy-making? How does the EC common vocational training policy affect and relate to the national processes? (This will be considered in Chapter Eight: Sect.8.5)

The research design devised for dealing with these two set of questions is presented in the following section where the nature of the research itself, its exploratory purpose and its technical organisation are considered.

1.5 UNDERSTANDING VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES

Two approaches to scientific investigation are commonly identified in the epistemological debate about research logic (Habermas, 1967). The first aims at discovering the "covering laws" that make it possible to explain and predict; the second is centred on the "understanding" of specific events or individual contexts in an holistic perspective. From the positivist point of view (Popper, 1959) they are considered as different stages in the development of a unique scientific method, while the hermeneutic perspective considers them as alternatives (Gadamer, 1960). In general terms, natural sciences and history typify the two poles of this dualism although it is hardly a question of a clear-cut dichotomy among disciplines.

Both patterns have successfully inspired research in social and political science. There are social and political studies that explore, illustrate, support and verify supposedly "universal" hypotheses (Bachrach and Baratz, 1962; 1963; Crenson, 1971; Lukes, 1974), isolate specific dimensions, put under scrutiny the relationship between selected variables and define conceptual grids. In so doing they foster the "replication" or extension of existing research. Alternatively, there are studies based more on the historical model of enquiry which provide "narrative accounts" of events taking place in specific, temporally bounded and geographically circumscribed contexts.

This thesis can hardly be placed in the positivist perspective; it is, rather, a qualitative analysis with an exploratory purpose. Its main objective is not to define or test "hypotheses" of causal relationships between variables; it has been designed in order to facilitate the "understanding" of the construction of vocational training policies and to illustrate some generalisations about policy formation and implementation that could prove to be heuristically helpful in interpreting policy practice.(6)

As vocational training is a relatively unformulated area in policy studies, we have devised a flexible research design that provides for considering a number of different aspects in this area. This design incorporate two levels: conceptual formulation and empirical findings.

The first concerns generalisable but mainly descriptive propositions about the nature of the policy process in the sector of vocational training. The lack of substantial theories of policy formation that could direct this specific enquiry toward relevant variables has made the use of concepts of general nature too complex. However some analytical perspectives and basic

conceptual tools of policy science have proved to be useful. This first part has been based upon a critical analysis of the existing literature and compiled bearing in mind the evolution of training policies in the post-second-world-war period in France, Italy, United Kingdom and Federal Republic of Germany. While focusing on the process of policy formation, we have departed from the usual typological and descriptive approaches to national vocational training systems and the case study method which governs the literature; we have, however, used extensively the results of such investigations.

The second part is a case study. Here we use an intensive study of a selected example in order to stimulate insights and suggest hypotheses (7) for the analysis of vocational training. The consistency and the scope of Governments' actions in the field of new training measures for the young as illustrated by international reports (European Centre, 1977b; 1978; 1981a; 1982a; OECD, 1978a; 1978b; 1980a; 1981; Melvyn, 1977a; Schneider, 1977; De Montlibert, Feldheim and Seidenspinner, 1979), led us to focus on the youth training schemes; this case has appeared to be of particular interest because of the initiative taken by the EC and because of the breadth of the related policy debate. (8)

Views, ideas and suggestions that have emerged in this case study have enriched the first part and have helped in the formulation of propositions. We have been aware in designing the research, that processes occurring in one case cannot be assumed to occur in others and that the conceptual formulation must therefore be provisional.

Two aspects of this thesis - its cross-national scope and the organisation of the fieldwork - need to be presented in more detail here.

1.6 THE CROSS-NATIONAL STUDY

There are reports on vocational training based on national case studies which present a collection of descriptions about individual countries. They tend to lack a comprehensive framework and can hardly be seen as comparative exercises. This study looks into vocational training in a few countries and is cross-national in two distinct senses (Elder, 1976).

First, the investigation as cross-national is consistent with a research tradition in social science. Durkheim in discussing the sociological method wrote:

"One cannot explain a social fact of any complexity except by following its complete development through all social species. Comparative sociology is not a particular branch of sociology; it is sociology itself, in so far as it ceases to be purely descriptive and aspires to account for facts." (1938:Chap.1)

Propositions about policy process have been gradually formulated on the bases of evidence coming from more than one country. By looking at youth training schemes in differing national contexts a broader view of the policy process will be developed.

There is a second sense in which this piece of research is cross-national. As stated above, one of the two basic research questions to be addressed is that of the interaction among national, and between a national and international, policy processes (e.g. at the EC level). This justifies the inclusion of more than one country and of EC policy initiatives

Countries to be chosen for this cross-national exercise had to satisfy three requirements: (a) to represent alternative training patterns according to the

current typologies; (b) to provide reasonable ground for the study of the relationship between national and EC policy process; (c) to be suitable in terms of the feasibility of the research.

The school-based systems of vocational training in France, industry-based training in the United Kingdom, and the 'dual system' in the Federal Republic of Germany have been considered to be the principle examples in the range of solutions existing in the EC area (9). The more marginal sector of 'formazione professionale' in Italy has been seen as a comparatively less developed system of vocational training (European Centre, 1980a).

In addition, conditions for carrying out the fieldwork were carefully taken into account. Direct access to sources and policy documents in their original languages (10) and the time required for reaching a degree of familiarity with the individual national contexts were decisive in the choice of countries, i.e. France, Italy and United Kingdom. Although the task was of a manageable size, this decision was a demanding challenge. The 'dual system' and policy developments in the Federal Republic of Germany could have also been a desirable component in this thesis. Although they were not directly analyzed in the fieldwork, they were used in the development of ideas.

In designing this cross-national exercise, decisions were taken in order to deal with the research problems. These decisions have resulted in the limitation of the thesis.

1.7 FIELDWORK

The case-study of youth training schemes was carried out using fieldwork in the three countries. Background work furnished us with preliminary general knowledge about the existing vocational training systems in each individual country. Data was gathered from two main sources: documents and interviews. The documentary analysis was organised in a similar way in the three countries and a list of the sources consulted is in the Appendix One.

The organisation and conducting of the interviews were inspired by the informant technique - a research strategy originally developed in anthropological research and now widely used in other contexts (see discussion in Appendix Three). Questionnaires, to be used as flexible guide for the interviews, were devised and compiled in the three languages (see Appendix Two). They included a common set of questions formulated and adjusted to each individual context. Thirty-five interviews were carried out in the period between June 1984 and September 1985 (see Appendix Two). The interviewees were selected according to their professional experience and the organisation or institution they were attached to. A range of competences and professional roles (educationists, politicians, lecturers, administrators, voluntary organisation members and experts) were taken into account as well as those in the main sectors of the policy arena (Government, Education, Trade Union and Employers). Three EC officials were also interviewed. Whenever possible the research was conducted along similar lines in the three countries. Because of the use of informants and a qualitative approach the fieldwork was easier and more successful in those countries with which I was more familiar and where I had more time to spend.

1.8 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

In this Chapter we have introduced the thesis by referring to its aims and basic assumptions and by outlining the research problems and design. The thesis is divided into two parts. Part One focuses on the policy process, at the national and the international levels and consists of three chapters. The first two are complementary and depict the state of the art; the first is more formulative, the second more exploratory. Chapter Two points out the main features of the policy process in the area of vocational training policies at the national level and sets out an analytical grid. It is argued here that vocational training as a policy area is not identifiable a priori: its shape and boundaries may change and are the outcome of policy processes. Hence the need for an hermeneutic attitude to uncover what is meant by vocational training in each national context. However, some cultural and structural determinants are identified and a set of policy dimensions is presented as a framework for describing each national situation.

In Chapter Three, European and international factors as potential determinants of national policy decisions are considered. This Chapter deals with the problem of national particularism in the area of vocational training and discusses current theories about differences among national systems. Several forms of interaction among countries such as the transfer of policy measures, the role of international bodies, the convergence of policy styles and the supranational links between policy actors, are mentioned.

Both chapters (Two and Three) are based primarily on the literature and have been compiled with reference to studies about vocational training policies in Western

European countries. No claim is, obviously, made to have covered all of the relevant literature.

Chapter Four deals with the central questions addressed by the research. The concept of a parallel action process as a device for understanding changes taking place in differing countries is presented and discussed in connection with the youth training schemes. An attempt is made to specify structural conditions or determinants of parallelism. The content of this Chapter has been reformulated during the course of the research according to the insights emerging from the fieldwork.

Part Two is devoted to the outcomes of the empirical work and includes four chapters.⁽¹¹⁾ Chapter Five analyses the making of a new policy perspective for youth training in the United Kingdom, i.e. how youth schemes came to be seen and presented as a new formula for the young, alternative to, from several points of view, traditional industrial training.

Chapter Six focuses on the Employment and Training Contracts introduced in Italy by the Youth Employment Act (1977) and seeks to understand why they remained largely unimplemented and, at the same time, were resumed in 1983 and 1984 in a different policy context and with a more incisive impact.

French youth schemes adopted in the framework of the Employment Pacts in the second half of the 1970's are presented in Chapter Seven.

The pressing need for action and the search for a more effective role inspired several initiatives taken by the EC institutions in the field of youth training. Chapter Eight outlines these and discusses the structural dilemmas of the EC 'common vocational training policy'.

The concluding chapter pulls together the two parts of this study - conceptual formulations and empirical findings. It discusses main features of the policy process in the area of vocational training, identifies policy commonalities and diversities in youth training policy and comments on the research strategy adopted. Moreover some policy implications of the study and suggestions for further research are pointed out. A few methodological questions are discussed in the Appendixes where detailed information about the research techniques used are also provided.

NOTES

(1) We have preferred this rather vague definition as a starting point for this piece of research because there is no equivalent of the words used in the countries we are going to focus on. The same kind of choice is made by Gregoire who defines 'vocational education' as "education preparing pupils for working life" (1967) and by the authors of an IMS report where "vocational education and training" are defined as "learning activities which contribute to successful economic performance" (IMS, 1984:iv). In addition we read in a EC document that training "comprises any process enabling a person to acquire, keep up-to-date, and perfect the technical knowledge and skills required for the exercise of a given occupation" (EEC, 1980). It may be useful to refer to the definition of training provided by the 1969 Vocational Training Act (Federal Republic of Germany); art.1 says that "the object of initial training shall be to provide, through a systematic training programme, a broadly conceived basic preparation for an occupation and the necessary technical abilities and knowledge to engage in a skilled form of occupational activity. The initial training shall also enable a trainee to acquire the necessary occupational experience." (Quoted in the contribution by H.Lemke to the Conference on "The Politics of Industrial Training Policy" (Edinburgh, 11.6.1982). Another used term is 'vocational education' that has also become common in the United Kingdom (see "The vocabulary of Vocational Education" in Entwistle, 1970). We have preferred 'vocational training' because it tends to incorporate actions organised in firm and outside the school, while vocational education hints more at school activities. 'Vocational education' has for a long time been the phrase used in OECD documents (Gregoire, 1967). See also the glossaries by Werner (1974; 1980) and by MSC (1981f).

(2) Many surveys and reports are issued by international organisations or national applied research bodies. See ESC, 1976; Boubli, 1976; Giugni, 1976; Muench, 1976; Wheatly, 1976; OECD, 1977a; 1977b; 1980b; 1983; European Centre, 1980a; 1982b.

(3) Among the several attempts to define the nature, scope and types of investigation in the area of policy science, we refer to the distinction formulated by Lasswell (1970) between 'knowledge of the policy process' and 'knowledge in the policy process' and the use proposed by Hogwood and Gunn (1984:26-29) of 'policy

studies' for descriptive or analytical accounts and of 'policy analysis' for prescriptive analyses. The policy process is the object itself of policy studies and policy analysis; it includes several aspects such as policy aims, proposals, decisions, legislation and programmes. Policy sector, area, domain refer to the definition of the boundaries of the policy process and are here used interchangeably. Public policies are those "to some degree generated or at least processed within the framework of Governmental procedures, influences and operations" (Hogwood and Gunn, 1984:24).

(4) On these aspects Bulmer (1982) and Finn (1982a) have provided interesting and rewarding readings.

(5) In designing this piece of research and in reporting its results it has proved to be difficult to isolate training from other adjacent areas. The risk is that references to manpower or employment policies may appear rather superficial and episodic. References to policy research about the EC will be made in Chapter Eight.

(6) Quantitative data have been introduced only when and if required by the account of the policy process. The lack of comparable and reliable data on training has been pointed out as a important feature of this policy sector. We have looked at the original national sources and at EC and OECD sources.

(7) See Selltitz, C.; Jahoda, M.; Deutsch, M. and Cook, S.W., (1962:51-65) for research strategies which may be adopted when facing unfrequented areas.

(8) Two other areas that came under consideration in the planning phase of the thesis were the potential impact on training of the new technologies and the role of training in promoting the 'creation of new activities' (European Centre, 1980b). Both did not appear to refer to easily identifiable programmes of action and their relationship with national policy agendas did not seem to be clear.

(9) The vocational training systems existing in the other EC Member States are commonly placed in one of the types. It is worth noticing that EC countries do not form a solid group which stand in contrast to the USA or to Japan; they present a large spectrum of possible positions (Reubens, 1982:69).

(10) As far as language problems are concerned, all the relevant French and Italian words have been translated into English; quotations and references in the text have also been translated. In both cases caution is necessary; when needed comments on the translation are included in the notes.

(11) While reporting the findings of the research a balance had to be sought between the need to provide basic background information and the need to focus on the specific research subject. Background information is provided in Chapters Six and Seven. Chapter Eight also includes an overview of EC vocational training policy in the 1970's as well.

PART ONE

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A POLICY SECTOR

CHAPTER TWO

THE CONSTRUCTION OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICIES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

According to the logic of investigation, a prime methodological requirement is the definition of terms, concepts and problems dealt with. As a consequence the first step in this piece of research is to state precisely what is meant by vocational training. The way in which this task may be undertaken is profoundly conditioned by the state of the art of studies in this area, the goals of this work and the research design itself.

As noted in Chapter One (Sect.1.3) from the existing literature it appears that vocational training is not as well-established a field of research as areas such as education and manpower policy. It is therefore difficult to start with a clear definition of vocational training. There are three basic related assumptions in this study. First, there are philosophical issues in ascertaining the nature of vocational training. However, they do not contribute significantly in an identification of the field of study. Second, it is necessary for a cross-national study to take into account existing criteria for delimiting the boundaries of the area, although they may result theoretically unimportant. Third, the definition of vocational training is, to some extent, part of the policy process under scrutiny. There are a number of different perspective which have considered the nature of education and training. As a result there is considerable debate with a great deal of alternative and opposing views (Peters, 1973; Lauglo, 1983).

At the beginning of this century, Kerschensteiner coined the idea of the "industrial school", whose duty he defined as "first of all to help each individual pupil to choose some work or, as we say, some vocation in the community" (1913:17-18). He contributed to the development of the main traditional principle for vocational training in the Federal Republic of Germany, that is the link between the school system and the employment system requires a combination of theoretical and practical training (Smart, 1975; Münch, 1976; Jochimson, 1978).

More recently, Peters, a leading philosopher of education, has advanced a view which is similar to that which is widely understood in the United Kingdom (Entwistle, 1970:63-67; Wringer, 1981). He sees education and training as irreconcilably different: training has a specificity and a utilitarian character which are not suggested by education (1967:7).

Alternatively, Lazerson and Grubb (1974) have investigated the penetration of vocationalism defined as "the orientation of education around preparation for labour markets" (Grubb, 1985:526) in American education. Grubb identifies two concepts of vocationalism. In a broad sense, vocationalism is "the view that schools are primarily devoted to preparing students for different occupations" (1985:526). A narrow form of vocationalism is the "development of relatively specific vocational education, new training institutions partially outside schools, tertiary schooling or further education" (1985:526).

The debate is far from being over; philosophical and ideological insights continue to be necessary to an understanding of the cultural options behind the existing systems of education and training. However, they do not contribute satisfactory criteria for delineating the

field of study here, particularly given that it is a cross-national exercise.

In the search for a preliminary definition we may instead, refer to a more external and pragmatic solution drawn from current classifications of vocational training systems and from the organisation of statistical data. In the late 1970's the Statistical Office of the EC attempted to establish education and training categories that could be acceptable to all the member countries. A distinction was made between 'general education' and 'vocational education' and both school-based and industry-based initial vocational training, mostly in the form of apprenticeships, were counted as vocational education (EEC, 1980:59-65).(1)

Another set of concepts mainly used by economists is presented by Becker (1964). In his analysis Becker distinguishes between 'general training' ("training useful in many firms besides those providing it":1964:11) and 'specific training' ("training that has no effect on productivity of trainees that would be useful in other firms" 1964:18). These definitions are particularly useful in understanding the propensity of employers to provide training (Ryan, 1980), but of little value for identifying the area of vocational training as a whole. While bearing in mind that there are philosophical implications in the definition of vocational training and by taking into account current practical delimitations of the training sector, we shall investigate how the "learning activities designed to contribute to occupational proficiency" (see Chapter One: Sect.1.1) are conceived, planned and implemented. The definition of what training is, what it is about and how it should be provided is part of the policy process. In a sense this piece of research may be seen as an attempt to uncover some 'rules' governing the process of definition.(2)

Four sections are included in this chapter. The first deals with the cultural and structural determinants of the policy sector under scrutiny; the second discusses government involvement in the field of vocational training; and the third disentangles the web of policy-making, isolating some aspects of this. The conclusion will point out the "symbiotic" policy status of the training issues and will stress the need for a contextualised analysis of vocational training policies.

2.2 THE DEEP STRUCTURE OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Decisions and non-decisions, actions and inactions, actual and potential issues are all pairs of categories that are relevant in policy studies (Lukes, 1974). Long-term alternatives are rarely the object of decisions and unplanned situations characterise the setting of the policy-making process (Ham and Hill, 1982:87). Explicit issues arise within an unconscious framework or a "deep structure" (Ham and Hill, 1982:176) that determines, within limits, the range of variation at the surface level. Fundamental decisions (Etzioni, 1967) that appear to remain mainly implicit and latent in the field of training policies are enshrined in some basic cultural and structural determinants of this policy area (3).

2.2.1 The Cultural Determinants.

Although originating from opposing paradigms, functionalist and conflict approaches to the study of manpower training both tend to look for "universals", i.e. for generalisations about existing patterns.

According to the functionalist point of view (Parsons, 1951), industrial and post-industrial societies need to provide a skilled labour force. This is a kind of general prerequisite in the process of economic development and modernization. Studies from a conflict perspective are centred on the processes of class structure maintenance and "social reproduction" (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970) that represent the actual contents of training activities.

Both perspectives fail to provide a satisfactory explanation of the persistence of differences between countries in the field of training. However understandable in terms of overall social and political processes, the existing arrangements for training cannot easily be considered "culture-free". This diversity among countries is an undisputed assumption in many descriptive and comparative surveys of national vocational training systems (4). Even in countries sharing a relatively common background such as those of Western Europe, national approaches appear to persist. While comparing the vocational education systems in the United States, Sweden, Japan and France, Reubens maintains that:

"Differences among the countries are substantial in matter of clientele, expectations, educational methods, organisation and administration." (1982:50)

Some social scientists (Maurice, Sorge and Warner, 1979) have considered manpower training as a crucial case providing evidence of the persistence of particularism in apparently similar contemporary societies. In this perspective vocational training as a cultural artefact is understandable in its ideological, historical and societal setting.

The lack of and the fruitless search for equivalent terms among countries, the empirical irrelevance of

existing conceptual analysis (Becker, 1964; Entwistle, 1970), the lack of substance in attempts to define current terminology (Page and Thomas, 1977), the difficulties in gathering comparable statistical data in the field of training, are all indicators of the prevalence of "national styles and traditions" (Lauglo, 1983).

Vocational training or vocational education are rather vague terms for what is defined and meant by 'industrial training' in the United Kingdom, "formation professionnelle" in France, "Berufsausbildung" in the Federal Republic of Germany or "formazione professionale" in Italy.(5) A basic difference between the above countries is the place each concept occupies in the set of beliefs which constitute the ideology of education and training.

In the case of the United Kingdom, it is interesting to note, it has sometimes been asked if there has ever been a training policy at all; in fact, vocational training has not been a high profile issue in the British context for a long time. Liberal education ideology, well-rooted in the British tradition,(6) and the comprehensive trends in the secondary school have left little room for training as an issue in education. Schooling has been kept basically academic and centred on the "educated amateurs" (Dahrendorf, 1983:47).(7)

Training in the United Kingdom has been considered more as an economic than an educational variable (Pettman, 1974): this is apparent in a report by the Manpower Services Commission:

"The basic philosophy in Britain towards training, unlike that in some overseas countries, is that employers should provide for their own training needs, just as they make

provision for investment in capital equipment, to the extent that they judge it profitably to do so". (1980:1)

Apart from this specific meaning, "training" has come to be used in connection not only with skilled workers, but also with more highly qualified workers and professionals (e.g. as in "teacher training"). "Day-release" education included in the 1944 Education Act has remained largely undeveloped and technical education has never enjoyed a high-priority status in the Government's policy, at least, not until more recent developments.(8) The need for training was mainly conceived as being relevant to special economic sectors and for special groups of workers: that is what "industrial training" in the United Kingdom means.

For a long time vocational training in France has been organised, as an in-school function: technical curricula exist in the school system ("enseignement professionnelle et technologique"), "formation" has a very broad meaning (Mialaret, 1979:231-232) and "education" and "formation" are often used as if they were synonymous.

The West German tradition in the area of training is based on the links between the school system and employment and on a combination of theoretical and practical training. This idea of 'industrial education' has been put into practice since the vocational schools were established some eighty years ago on the principle formulated by Kerschensteiner (1913) that apprentices should be taught not only by the master craftsmen but also by others who would be responsible for their theoretical and "civic" training.

It has been noted that there has not been a well-developed 'training culture' in Italy (Vaciago, 1980) Alberoni comments that in Italian schools there has

been a prevalence of the:

"...literary component, although modern, brilliant, ideological instead of practical and technical skills and attitudes to problem-solving." (1976:12)

Moreover, what is meant by "formazione professionale" (9) is basically the regionalised system of vocational training which is only one part of the whole set of existing vocational education and training opportunities. Training organised directly by employers, recently under reconsideration (Bruno, 1984), and the vocational education provided in schools (e.g. "istituti professionali": vocationally-oriented secondary schools) have not often been considered in the training policy debate.

Vocational training issues tend to be defined within an ideological context which itself is the result of historical developments. The second set of factors that affect this policy area is included in what is called 'tradition' or "the inherited structures and the traditional behavioural habits" (European Centre, 1980a:7). The case of apprenticeship, a classical instance of "heritage from the past" (Gregoire, 1967:15), illustrates how training institutions are entangled in historical change (Lee, 1979). In all the major West European countries there are apprenticeships, but it is not far from the truth to say that the most common element may well be some kind of assumed similar historical origin.(10) The mediaeval craft system is generally at the origin of contemporary apprenticeship system. This training institution, based on the personal and hierarchical relationship between the trainee and the master, on the responsibility of skilled manpower and on the continuity of the craft, has passed through the industrial revolution, the organisation of modern states, the setting up of complex education systems, the

emergence of modern systems of industrial relations and, more recently, the adoption of active manpower policies.

Existing apprenticeship systems are the outcome of a long and complex process that is strictly dependent upon the economic, industrial, political and social history of individual countries. This is widely illustrated by the role of the French Revolution in erasing the "guild" system and, as a consequence, the apprenticeship system (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:9). Another example of this historical connection is the link, in the United Kingdom, between craft unionism and the apprenticeship system, leading to the use of apprenticeship as a method of restricting entry to a trade and regulating the content of a craft (Barbash, 1972:130-131).

The third set of factors that call for a cultural understanding of vocational training concerns the interaction between manpower training and other variables such as industrial relations, organisational structures, work characteristics of jobs and systems of recruitment. The "societal effect approach" (11) has offered an important contribution to this perspective by analysing the links between training and the organisation of manufacturing units; between the qualification systems in the productive world and the certification systems of vocational training; and between hierarchies in firms and in training (Maurice, Sorge and Warner, 1979).

Ideology, tradition and societal effect are three sources of "fundamental decisions" (Etzioni, 1967) in the process of policy-making in the field of vocational training. There are methodological implications for investigations in this area. It tends to be very difficult to talk about vocational training or to identify this policy area without making reference to a specific context. The meaning of words and the words

themselves are part of the "world of action"; they are embedded in the dynamics of policies, rooted in long-term institutional change or persistence, culturally shaped and covering the extant administrative structure.

As a consequence, it seems impossible to comply with the current methodological rule of starting with a definition: what training is, what it is for, what training is about and who pays for it are questions for investigation, and not for conceptual categorisation; they are crucial policy issues (Norris and Thomas, 1982).

More generally the analysis of vocational training policies requires an "hermeneutic" reconstruction (Scharpf, 1978:349); there is no single cultural format, there is no simple or deductive way out of the existing "confusion of the tongues" except to attempt to "understand" each context from within.(12)

2.2.2 The Structural Constraints

Vocational training is an area of policy interest, but an atypical one. There are some difficulties in bringing it into focus. It is not a clear-cut area; its borders are rather loose, flexible and floating and conceptually and institutionally different in different countries. By comparison it does not appear as stable and as easily identifiable a policy area as education and health services.

Many policy studies have been devoted to the emergence and processing of policy issues. Although they provide useful insights, they tend to ignore the relevance of the structural settings in which such processes take place. Training issues cannot only be viewed in the same way as the temporary issues on the political stage such as

environmentalism, poverty or urban renewal (Tesh, 1984). Vocational training policies have to contend with long-established arrangements; they are well-rooted in the past environment; and they are located in a variety of institutionalised frameworks.

In this section we shall argue that the peculiarity of training policies has to be traced to three basic factors concerning their structural setting. First, is the unaccomplished process of differentiation of training as a specialised area and, as a consequence, different patterns of policy sectorisation. Second, is the fragmentation of policy processes and the lack of consistent "policy communities"; third, is the varied and ever-changing system of resource allocation.

a) The Unaccomplished Institutional Differentiation.

The modernisation of contemporary societies has been depicted by sociologists as a process of gradual institutional differentiation leading to specialised agencies dealing with a range of societal functions (Parsons, 1951: Chapters IV and V) and to policy segments. Educational differentiation which led to the development of the school system is a paradigmatic case.

By way of contrast, the training function ('preparation for work') has been shared by many different bodies and has been both firmly embedded in the education system and outwith it. There is not, generally speaking, a well-developed institutional framework. There is no national body or bureaucracy dealing exclusively with training, no monopolisation of responsibility in the field of training, no indisputable demarcation between training and other policy areas such as education or employment, and no clear-cut division between administrative territories.

Unfortunately there have been few efforts to understand the reasons for this. The few that exist tend to be limited to development in specific countries or to specific training institutions (Liepmann, 1960), they lack general applicability and they tend to be descriptive (Ramirez and Meyer, 1981). Some factors such as the development of national bureaucracies, the expansion of state power, the rise of professional autonomy in the area of training, the cultural understanding of the preparation for work and the long-term involvement by governments in the employment-related matters could provide preliminary explanations.(13)

There is as a consequence of the lack of a developed institutional framework a high level of policy sectorialisation. Training policies tend to be the result of policies pursued in more than one sector and overall national policies hardly exist. Moreover, the institutional fabric provides different environments among countries and policy systems vary greatly. The instability of the institutional setting enlarges the scope of possible changes, unlike other fields where changes tend to come about within a relatively stable institutional domain.

The definition of the vocational training sector is, therefore, 'particularistic' and depends upon existing institutional arrangements. In countries like Italy or the United Kingdom where, for different reasons, the level of institutionalisation has been traditionally low, the territory is bound to be less clearly demarcated and stable and the institutional framework more subject to modifications.

(b) The Fragmentation of the Policy Process

The group theory has been widely used in policy studies.

Richardson and Jordan assert that:

"the interplay of group pressure is the dominant feature of the policy process in Western democracies." (1979:3).

The policy formation process has often been considered in terms of "policy community" i.e. "a set of actors with a strong sense of belonging, cohesion and loyalty" (Jordan, 1981:95). As a corollary "specialized policy communities" are supposed to play a crucial role, owing to the segmentation of policy processes (Richardson, 1982:200ff). Stringer and Richardson in their study of industrial training in the United Kingdom note that:

"there are three dominant interests that may be said to form the nucleus of the policy community: employers, trade unions and education (mainly further and higher education)". (Richardson and Stringer, 1982:34)

From this perspective there is a consistent configuration of interests. They do not, however, form a stable iron-triangle; and it can hardly be said that there is a clearly demarcated policy community. The policy space tends to be fragmented: the more the domain is undergoing change or is unstable, the more the interplay of groups tends to vary.

First of all, the matrix of competing interests is only in very general terms based on a limited set of actors. Employers, trade unions and educationists are always influential, being involved in training issues on a routine basis. (However, there is no single way of predicting the nature of their involvement and intervention in the policy-making process). Their basic attitudes on training do not lead to an unequivocal stance on any particular issue.

Second, there are cases in which training has become a major issue in non-training policies and as a result many external groups are implicated.

It may well be more appropriate to think in terms of "issue networks" in which there are some first-rank members, various groupings and a considerable number of new comers, rather than of stable groups, who change only slightly in response to each new issue.

The development of policies in the last thirty years is testimony to this fragmentation of the process of policy-making. The legislative initiatives taken in the course of the last three decades seem to be tips of various icebergs. There is a certain amount of discontinuity owing to the fragmentation.

(c) The Changing Resource Dependence

A third reason for these unfixed policy boundaries may well be found in the way in which vocational training is financed. Benson defines a policy sector as:

"a cluster or complex of organizations connected to each other by resources dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resources dependencies". (quoted in Ham and Hill, 1982:176)

The financing system varies greatly from one country to another (European Centre, 1980a; OECD, 1983:64-69), particularly in the way in which the costs are shared by government and industry. There are funding arrangements for individual sectors, such as apprenticeships or training in schools. Most countries have more than one structure of resource dependence although these structures are not completely independent. Examples are the industrial training provided under the aegis of the Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) and the training

courses for young unemployed people promoted by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC) in the United Kingdom.

From this point of view vocational training is made up of adjacent sectors based on different resource dependencies and so is organised under different "umbrellas". For instance in the Federal Republic of Germany the programmes which are run by the Federal Employment Agency (BundesAnstalt für Arbeit BAA) with its own source of finance co-exist with the apprenticeship system.

Apart from the multiplicity of dependencies and the plurality of financing mechanisms (levy-grant system in the United Kingdom; national levy-system attached to the general system of taxation (apprenticeship tax) in France, common funds created by employers and employees in the Federal Republic of Germany) (European Centre, 1980a), we have to consider the basic weakness of the financing formulae in this area. This weakness results from the unsolved broad issue in many countries concerning the responsibility for training. As an OECD report puts it:

"Experience in the design of financing arrangements indicates that there are a few major issues which it has so far proved difficult if not impossible to resolve".
(1980b:65)

Whether vocational training is the responsibility of employers or of the Government is still open to discussion. Each country has found its own solution. New policies originate not infrequently from changes in resource dependencies, and all consequent financial arrangements have far-reaching policy implications.(14)

The absence of a long-standing system, the succession of temporary arrangements and the co-existence of

adjacent financing structures are factors which inevitably cloud the contours of the training area. In fact, most studies concerning the development of vocational training tend to isolate some of the sectors or to concentrate on short-time 'courses of action'.

As a consequence of these peculiarities it may be that training is better considered as a policy arena rather than a policy area. (Wolanin and Gladieux, 1975) It presents something similar to the organised chaos of a circus. Its flexible profile in different countries, its composite nature and its variable scope raise substantial questions: Does such policy sector exist? Is the international literature use of categories such as 'vocational training' or 'vocational education', misleading?

There are common factors, however, that allow us to consider training as a truly policy sector in West European countries:

1. There are legal bases for action in this sector; all countries have specific legislative measures in this field and they tend to consider it as different from education or employment.
2. There are political institutions dealing with training (e.g. parliamentary committee, Government Departments).
3. There are executive agencies that carry out the decided policies.
4. There are lobby organisations and interests.

These factors provide a starting point for analysis of vocational training policies allowing for a full study of policy formation and implementation.(15)

2.3 BALANCE BETWEEN STATE AND MARKET

Townsend says that the task of the study of the policy process is:

"...Unravelling and evaluating the policy of society, or, more consistently, the policies of different social groups or agencies, with the Government and industry being the predominant agencies in advanced industrial societies".
(1976:6)

From this prospect a number of social actors are concerned with the provision of trained manpower. As a result, the policies of these different actors are influential. The extent to which the Government is involved and there is a public policy is a variable. Although 'anything is potentially the subject of public policy', it is the political analyst's task to investigate why some issues enter or fail to enter the political agenda, and why some areas are or are not considered the domain of public interest.

A first glimpse at the variability from one country to another in terms of Government involvement is offered by a comparison of public expenditure for training. This indicator has to be considered in the context of the political stance behind it.

The presence and the type of public interest in training may well be identified by: (a) the level of public expenditure; (b) the choice between explicit state policies and market solutions; in addition explicit state policies (c) may well take the form of Government-sponsored market solutions or public sector solutions.

There have been, unfortunately, few attempts to ascertain the factors affecting the different attitudes of governments; however, the basic "philosophy" that

inspires training policies is linked to attitudes on broader issues such as the regulation and operation of the economy.

(a) Public Expenditure on Training

Generally speaking, the Government is not always the only source of funds for vocational training; it tends, however, to be the most important or, at least, the crucial one. By comparing public expenditure (16) for training in different countries it could be seen that the weight given to training varies from one national budget to another. (See Tab. 2.1; 2.2)

Tab. 2.1 Government Total Expenditure on Training (1978) (17).

	FRG	France	Italy	UK
	Mio DM	Mio FF	Mrd LIT	Mio UKL
Nat.Curr.	9,418.17	31,440.46	341.4	751,194
Mio ECU	3,684.70	5,477.57	316.07	1,131.49
Mio PPS(x)	3,118.65	5,211.00	402.6	1,430.96

(x) Purchasing Power Standard is a means by which national currencies are converted to a common unit and is more accurate than the European Currency Unit (ECU). Source: EuroStat, Education and Training 1, (1982):2.

Important facts can be extrapolated by these figures. It is clear that high-spending Governments such as the French and West German, pour substantial amounts of money into vocational training; others such as the Italian and the British spend much less.

In addition, by considering the internal structure of the financing system, we find that the global amount of money spent is in part - in some cases a major part -

spent in the ordinary school system.(18) The funds for training are not completely separate from the general expenditure for education.

Moreover, public expenditure does not cover all financing of vocational training. The part played by employers as in the Federal Republic of Germany (Winterhagen, 1980) is sometimes consistent and, as a consequence, reduces Government's scope for decision-making and the way in which the Government can implement its policies.

The amount of public money spent in this area, the level of autonomy from the school system and the structure of the financing system are three elements that define the features of vocational training as a public policy.

(b) State and/or Market

Whether Government involvement remains latent or takes explicit forms, such as legislative action and direct funding, cannot be assumed. The presence of an explicit policy is a variable to be considered.

The propensity to spend which varies from one country to another can be traced back to some basic attitudes that concern not just training, but also a broader set of related policy areas.

Political categories have been used to define Governments stance in this respect. The absence of conspicuous and explicit public intervention is sometimes viewed as deriving from "laissez-faire" political philosophy. The consequent autonomy and the major role of social actors resulted in such a system being defined as "voluntaristic" (Pettman, 1974). More recent courses of action by the Governments have been considered from the

perspective of "deregulation" trends (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:36; Garonna, 1986).(19)

By way of contrast, decisions taken by the Government within the framework, for example, of national planning, have been termed 'interventionist'. This was the case in the setting up of the Industrial Training Boards in the United Kingdom (Mukerjee, 1970). Active manpower policies and policy responses to economic recession have led to 'interventionist' attitudes by Governments.

The factors explaining these basic attitudes are various. Some are related to broader political orientations, others are linked to historical developments, and still others are more directly connected with the training institutions.

As a result, the policies adopted may differ greatly between the poles of maximum and minimum intervention of Government. By using a dichotomy, current in social policy (Pinder:1971), they may vary from a 'residual' status, e.g., the post-war legislation in Italy, to an institutional status, e.g., the inclusion of the training function into the school system in France. In relation to the public concerned, training policies differ: from the selective policies catering for special target groups to 'universal' policies designed to provide opportunities for global sectors. The latter are exemplified by the dual system in the Federal Republic of Germany which is intended to cover all under-18's who do not attend schools as full-time students (Smart, 1975).

The position of any Government in this process cannot be assumed. It may change both in the short term as the development of training policies have shown, and from one country to another, as an international comparison points

up. This must be carefully considered in analysing training policies of various countries.

(c) Direct Government Action and/or Government-sponsored Market Solutions

A second issue at stake, in the policy-making process, is the way in which the Government intervenes. There are two main courses of action. The first is the provision of training by the Government itself. In general terms, this is the provision of training inside the school system. The technical schools set up during the 1960's in Italy exemplify this arrangement. In other instances, a public training provision sector developed on a marginal scale mainly in order to deal with the exceptional circumstances of particular categories in the labour force (Pettman and Showler, 1974).

The Government on the other hand can intervene in an indirect way by promoting, facilitating, regulating or controlling training activities. Sometimes this intervention operates by making more resources available or by creating new administrative structures or "hiving-off" Government functions. Sometimes it takes the form of legislative action: "framework legislation" or "promotion law" or "laws enforcing previous agreements between social partners" or "law introducing incentives or sanctions in order to increase the number of people on training".(20)

In most situations this indirect action by Governments is linked to the existence of a 'training market' with private and public bodies competing for the available resources. For instance, the funds, made available in France in the early 1970's for further training and retraining opened a "marché de la formation".

The choice between these alternatives depends upon the political orientation of the Government concerned. In the light of this even the usual identification of vocational training as a public system has to be handled with caution.(21) The debate that took place in Italy at the time of the regionalisation of vocational training was largely dominated by the "private/public" issue and the main differences between the regional training structure lie in the chosen balance between a public and a private system (Valentini, 1982). Unlike other policy sectors, training seems to be at the crossroads of troublesome political choices (22) which are not all long-term. It is therefore well rooted in the main stream of political life.

2.4 POLICY DIMENSIONS

The two perspectives for analysing vocational training policies, that is cultural and structural constraints (Sect.2.2.) and the Government's involvement (Sect. 2.3), set the overall scene. The policy process taking place within it is hardly understandable as a whole. It presents several facets. In approaching them we have isolated a set of dimensions; they account for some variability among countries, although they do not pretend to be exhaustive.

2.4.1 Vocational Training on the Government's Agenda: National Obligation versus Second-order Policy Issues.

This section deals with the position of training issues on Government agenda and discusses how these issues relate to Government policy priorities. In particular it points out that vocational training is not seen as a

"national obligation" (23) in all countries. In some, training is hardly apparent as a policy issue and policies tend to be the outcome of a process of the "drawing in" of training issues into broader policies. The low profile of training as a policy issue is illustrated with examples and the consequences for the analysis of training policies explored.

During the post-1945 period (24) in the United Kingdom and in Italy, vocational training has hardly been at the centre of the political stage compared with other issues such as those in the field of education.

After post-war legislation in Italy (1949) which reshaped the organisation of training in Italy, it was some time before training reforms were put forward; and until the 1970's they were few in number and scope. (24) Mukherjee, in his analysis of ITBs, asserts openly that:

"...training given to workpeople to do their job effectively in industry has not ever been a matter of serious concern in Britain". (1970:4)

and summarising the situation during the 1950's he says:

"...the major institutions party to economic decision-making - management, trade unionism and the Government - were not persuaded of the importance of training". (1970:4)

According to Pagnoncelli (1979), in Italy before the 1970's there was no systematic provision of training (Pagnoncelli, 1979) outside the school system. Owing to the absence of a public policy, employers and the market regulated the process of training young people and retraining adults. Various groups and bodies competed for the resources allocated by the Government to training. Consequently, regional Governments had to originate policies in this area (Pagnoncelli, 1979:197). Other factors explaining the low-visibility of training issues are the lack of hard political controversy (Vaciago,

1980:42), consensus among the political parties and support of training interests.

While discussing the setting up of the Industrial Training Boards (ITBs) (Mukerjee, 1970:2: "a unique institutional structure") in the United Kingdom, Mukherjee refers to the widespread concern about the shortage of skilled workers and the great emphasis on the redistribution of costs, but he also recognises that the:

"...preoccupation with apprentices was no more than a continuation of traditional views about the best method of training for skills in industry." (1970:28)

Moreover most of the changes have been either modifications in the regulatory role of the Government or additions of new sectors or ways of intervention. This low policy-visibility does not necessarily mean policy inertia (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:23). The way in which policy change come about is crucial.

By looking at some radical changes that have taken place in the area of training, it appears that training issues somewhat surreptitiously enter Government agendas. This is the result of their being introduced on the basis of broader policy aims. This consideration is asserted by Anderson and Fairley in these terms:

"views on training reform tend to be shaped by views held on non training-issues." (1983)

It is also mentioned by Stringer and Richardson (1982: 23), Norris and Thomas (1982) and Moon (1983:302).

The creation of ITBs in the United Kingdom, the regionalisation of the vocational training system in Italy and the development of active manpower policies are examples which can be considered in this context. These three cases seem to be paradigmatic: the setting up of

the ITBs was a consequence of a change in the economic policy of the Conservative Government in the early 1960's, the regionalisation of the Italian training system was a side-effect of a general restructuring of the local-national dimension that took place in Italy during the 1970's; the "training emphasis" in the manpower policies was based on employment considerations more than on internal developments. The first of these three is considered in detail.

The ITBs have been viewed as an "imaginative experiment" (OECD, 1970:21). They had, in fact, no parallel in other countries and their introduction in 1964 led to a remarkable reform.

It is often said that a basic concern about skill shortages, a long-standing policy issue in the British political debate, fostered the new institutional structures. It is arguable whether or not this was the decisive factor.

Mukherjee points out that the 1950's was a decade of "shortages" and that:

"despite this (shortage of skilled manpower), everyone directly concerned with the system continued to adhere to the view that industrial training was and should remain the responsibility of industry". (1970:19)

In addition he argues that:

"explicit and vigorous discussion of factors that might influence the quantity of skilled manpower available was neither welcomed nor practised. But the underlying assumption appeared to imply a profound belief in the efficiency of the operation of market forces". (1970:20)

Similarly Stringer and Richardson (1982) point out that

there was no pressure for change:

"In the training area prior to 1962 there was no recognizable policy community or machinery through which the Government had to carry out lengthy negotiations, which in effect meant that a policy initiative was more likely to be successful". (1982:24)

The economic policy of the Conservative Government (Anderson and Fairley, 1983) caused the change: this led to an interventionist approach, and planning was considered as an aid to economic management. As for training, it meant abandoning a "laissez-faire" attitude.

Not only was the initiative for training reform based on a broader policy issue, but also the instrument that was created appears to be largely inspired by the trend in Britain "towards rather weak forms of institutionalised 'co-operation'". (Anderson and Fairley, 1982:10) such as the National Economic Development Council. As Anderson and Fairley say:

"It illustrates that the institutions for formulating and implementing policy are influenced by general views of the way in which the Government ought to influence economic factors". (1982:10)

Finally it is worthwhile noticing that although the institution of ITBs could be considered a "shock treatment" (Drake, 1980:7), it was not a substantial change. Drake maintains that:

"In spite of the setting up of the TB, the MSC and the numerous measures adopted by the public authorities, between 1964 and 1973, approaches and criteria have essentially remained as they were before the 1964 Industrial Training Act". (1980a:4)

The pattern illustrated here is useful for understanding policy formation. Training matters cannot be dealt with on their own; it is necessary to consider

the broader issues encapsulating the training ones. The focus of analysis needs to be centred on larger issues.

Three sets of implications are apparent: the first is the Governmental setting of training policies; the second is flexible and multi-purpose use of training (training as a policy instrument), the third is the relationship between the Government and the policy community. Broader Government policies on manpower, economic or industrial development are the prime mover of training policies: they provide the necessary strength, support or consensus for change. Understanding training policies implies investigating these broader policies (Moon, Webber and Richardson, 1986).

Vocational training is perceived as a multi-purpose instrument, palatable to many policy actors, something good and acceptable, however the links between means and ends are defined. There are many indirect pay-offs of training.(25) The structuring of the policy system takes place accordingly. New Government policies may foster the creation of new policy community.

The pattern does not intend to be exhaustive; it is peculiar to this policy area but not unique. There are examples of different positions of training issues; in countries, such as France and the Federal Republic of Germany, where training has an established plausibility as a priority, policies are defined straightforwardly. Training is an end in itself and nation-wide arrangements are secured by the Government and the social partners. The provision here tends to be universal and institutionalised.

2.4.2 Vocational Training as a Complex Policy Area: Mono-bureaucracy and Inter-organisational Policy Networks

Administration lies at the centre of the policy-making process (Ridley, 1979): public organisations are linked with public policy processes and Government programmes (Hall and Quinn, 1983). Organisational complexity (La Porte, 1975) is built into contemporary society. There are, therefore, no policy areas that could, plausibly, be considered simple from the point of view of their administrative structures.

Differences concern levels of complexity. By "complexity" we mean, in this context, the multiplicity of organised units involved in policy formation and implementation (26).

Public policies in vocational training are not executed by large public organisations. More than other adjacent fields such as education, vocational training is either a multi-organisational sector or it is based on a complex network of organisations. Even in countries such as France, where training is a public responsibility, or the Federal Republic of Germany where there is a highly organised system, a mono-organisation system does not exist.

Moreover, unlike the basic approach to training, organisational arrangements cannot be traced back entirely to the past; they have been enriched by new bodies and pervaded by institutional developments. The Manpower Services Commission, the French Agence pour le Développement de la Formation Continue (ADEP), the German Bundesanstalt für Arbeit (BAA) and the Italian Assessorati Regionali alla Formazione Professionale have modified quite substantially the organisational setting. The lack of a centrally controlled bureaucracy creates an open space whose organisational configuration varies greatly from one country to another.

Four aspects will be discussed: the responsibility for training at the national level, the role of regional bodies, the functions of non-departmental organisations and the part played by market organisations.

Responsibility for training is seldom a one-department monopoly; arrangements differ from one country to another. However, in general terms, training tends to be a multi-departmental policy.

In the United Kingdom, the departments with an interest in training are numerous (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:34-35): the Department of Employment, the Department of Education and Science, the Treasury, and the Department of Trade and Industry. Training matters can be seen in the context of these different departments.

In the Federal Republic of Germany the dual system involves three different departments: the BundesMinisterium für Bildung und Wissenschaft, the BundesMinisterium für Arbeit und Social Ordnung, and the BundesMinisterium für Wirtschaft.

In France where the "pattern of centralisation through the central control of all local administrations has remained largely unchanged" (Ridley, 1979:73), there is a remarkable example of multi-departmental policy. There was a "Secrétariat de la formation professionnelle", now Ministère de la Formation Professionnelle since 1981, and a Délégation à la Formation Professionnelle, a sort of interministerial committee for vocational training whose members are representatives of the Departments of Education, Employment, Industry, and Agriculture (Legave and Vignaud, 1982).

In Italy the central government has a mainly indirect role due to the decentralisation that took place during the 1970's. The Ministero del Lavoro (Ministry of Employment) is concerned with a few marginal aspects (training of teachers and instructors, training for



Italian workers abroad, application for ESF and management of ISFOL). However, the division of responsibility between the Ministero del Lavoro and the Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione is remarkable: the latter is responsible for the Istituti Professionali di Stato, the technical schools inside the school system. The lack of a national centre for training conflicts somewhat with other aspects like placement or work legislation which are nationally based.

Generally speaking Government departments do not administer policies, nor do they conduct executive operations: they are primarily concerned with the formulation of policy and the regulation of the existing activity of other bodies. There are also different ways of linking the various departments.

There are notable differences among countries regarding the level of decentralisation of responsibilities; they depend upon the global administrative structure and institutional framework. Decentralisation is based in Italy and in the Federal Republic of Germany on constitutional grounds; in France the local units have been less relevant till recently. In the United Kingdom the role of the local authorities is crucial in this area, as they are responsible for further education as well as for education and related areas (Reubens, 1982:68-9).

The role of the Italian regional governments and West German 'Laender' (national governments as opposed to the Federal Government) is crucial in vocational training and leads to a substantial differentiation of the provision of training (Fadda, 1981:48; Smart, 1975:155; European Centre, 1980a:31). The Italian 1978 Act on Vocational Training (n.845 passed on 23.12.1978) aimed at establishing a satisfactory level of homogeneity among the regions as far as skill structure, certification and

role of the teachers was concerned, but it left to the Regions the choice among different avenues in relation to the administrative systems. In some Regions there is direct management, in others local councils are the main actors and in others there is a lot of room for private bodies.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, while a big effort has been made in the direction of harmonizing the curricula of vocational schools (Smart, 1975), there are discrepancies in performance. Differences are clearly visible in the case of the "one-year basic vocational course"(27).

Besides government departments, their decentralised units and regional units there are other bodies that deal with training. The growth of "indirect government" (Hood, 1982) in the United Kingdom or the innovation of public administration in France have led to a variety of bodies and agencies devoted to training: their links with Government Departments are strict but not enough to place them on an equal footing.

The Industrial Training Boards, the Manpower Services Commission, the "Agence pour l'Emploi", and the Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale are examples of this development in many policy sectors. In Italy and in France they tend to play a consultative and advisory role, while in other countries they directly promote training or are involved in the delivery system.(28)

The creation of new bodies is continuous and some are reorientated. One consequence may well be a sort of disintegration of the centre as in the case of the Department of Employment Group (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:58-59). The outcome of these trends is the spreading in all countries of "communities of multiple agencies" (Hood, 1982:58; Metcalfe, 1984:110).

The administrative complexity suggests several policy implications. They tend to add one more source of differentiation among the countries's training systems.

First of all, the multiplicity of departments and quasi-governmental bodies is a potential source of conflict and clashing interests: a type of institutional rivalry is apparent in the four countries (29). This is one of the major constraints on the development of training policies. Second, the various administrative units may well play a relevant role in policy formation. They are not just part of the bureaucratic apparatus, but may act as interest groups (Ridley, 1979:61). "Within puts" (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:93) will include not only resistance to change on the part of bodies, but also pressure for intervention and influence in the implementation process. Third, the complexity impinges upon the feasibility of national policies when it is barely identifiable with a central authority. National policies are configured as a national or general framework or they attempt to regulate the working of the system, rather than governing the complex administrative structure. And, finally, the working of the system seems, paradoxically, less paralysed than expected. This multi-bureaucracy (Hood, 1982:62) layout provides, as Vincens says, for more flexibility:

"It is paradoxical to see that the great complexity of arrangements developed in France after 1959 and particularly after 1970, did not lead to episodes of blockade (with the exception of few old institutions)". (1980:92)

The administrative structure in this policy area is not a monolithic bureaucracy but an inter-organisational structure and a complex network (Rainey and Midward, 1983:141) and the working of these structures needs mechanisms to reduce complexity (e.g. programmes, Hjern and Porter, 1979:16).

2.4.3 Trade Unions and Employers: Training as a Matter of Collective Negotiations

The priority of policy analysis is to consider the configuration of interests in a specific policy area. It is argued here that it is useful to distinguish the basic interests in training, represented by trade unions and employers, from the more contingent pressure or interest groups which tend to arise and shape the policy communities.

Trade unions and employers, the "iron couple", will be considered in this section as basic interest groups. Their method and weight of influence vary from one country to another as do the industrial relations systems (Doeringer, 1981); their relevance, however, remains constant.

Placed in a 'no-man's land', between school and work, training concerns both. It can hardly be conceived solely on school bases, even when it takes place in the school environment. There are structural links (qualifications, work experience) that overlap the area of negotiation between employers and trade unions (Sorge and Warner, 1980:318). For this reason, training is not an intermittent issue in the context of industrial relations, but a continuous one. Two examples may show how training is linked to the kind of relationship between trade unions and employers.

The apprenticeship system in the United Kingdom is illustrative. Passed from Guild control to State control and to the free contract system in the 19th century, the apprenticeship system is interconnected with "restrictive practices" (Liepmann, 1960; Barbash, 1972:130-131; Lee,

1979). As Liepmann states:

"The apprenticeship system fulfills the function of regulating entry in the skilled occupations and this approach is still alive".
(1960:14)

However, influence is not always so direct. In Italy trade unions attitudes have been influential in a different way. By setting the tone of the debate on vocational training and by indicating the limits of their position, trade unions have had considerable influence upon training policies. Their position in relation to apprenticeship has, for a long time, been quite clear: opposition from trade unions is linked to its substantial reduction of it and to the lack of complete implementation (Varesi, 1983:122). The roots of trade union attitudes can be traced back to a traditional understanding of training and related issues. In the after 1945 period an egalitarian and antidiscriminatory stance led the unions to oppose any form of co-management with employers and to express a certain amount of 'suspicion' (Colasanto, 1978:120) towards apprenticeship. This was matched with a voluntaristic system of industrial relations.

The situation also appears to be marked by a lack of appreciation of training (30). In his contribution to an European Centre report, Vaciago says:

"Industrialisation in Italy was not a spontaneous evolution from craft to industry. It was introduced as an external process based on weak technology and the use of cheap labour. Italian trade unionism is not the result of the development of craft unionism; it is the outcome of a long tradition of class struggle inspired by egalitarianism. Training for skills is, as a consequence, not properly appreciated: productivity on the job is the employers' priority and the egalitarian improvement of workers' wages and life is the main objective of trade unions." (1980a:61)

In both cases training does not appear to be a source of major concern in itself; it is an incidental or sectoral interest (Liepmann, 1960:187). Both employers and trade unions are involved in decision concerning vocational training. Vocational Training is a matter of exchange (Levine and White, 1961): this is the conclusion reached by Varesi having analysed the contents of the negotiations between trade unions and employers in Italy. Varesi concludes that:

"When social partners intervene in order to define rules concerning this matter, there is an exchange, i.e. partners take the opportunity for exchanging through vocational training, employment advantages (trade unions) and availability of skilled manpower (employers)". (1983:138)

This process of exchange takes place in a variety of contexts: differences exist between top level and basis level, among unions and industrial sectors. The levels of monopolisation of interests (Steck, 1980) and participation of trade unions and employers in the Government policy machinery are variables which require investigation. The co-management of manpower and training matters is not a common pattern in the countries we refer to. (31) The factory level is crucial for all training modelled on the "dual system" and based on contract; at the national level employers and trade unions may be involved in processes of political exchange with the Government. Large differences exist among industrial sectors (Vaciago, 1980a:36f) and among unions, as the case of general and craft unions in the United Kingdom testifies. Moreover, Government policy machinery which involves Trade Unions and employers, may offer a new framework decision making related to vocational training. As a result, it modifies the conditions of exchange.

Because training is a matter of collective negotiation and exchange, modifications in this policy sector tend to

involve changes at various levels. The feasibility of a national policy is conditioned by the context: it has to meet sectional interests and to be formulated in terms of national interest. National policy means a national framework facilitating the exchange between social partners (employers and trade unions). In France Government decisions have been linked to collective agreement on several occasions (See Chapter Seven:Sect.7.4). From this point of view the making (formation and implementation) of a policy inevitably involves a compromise between Government goals and trade unions and employers positions. When such compromise become an agreement, Government policy may well take off easily.

2.4.4 Dispersed Professionalism and Professional Groups

Governments deal indirectly with training (Sect.2.4.1), the related organisational structure is greatly fragmented (Sect.2.4.2) and trade unions and employers are only incidentally interested in vocational training (Sect.2.4.3).

This section adds another element to the understanding of the construction of training policies. It is centred on 'professionals', people who deal with training as part of their job. Professions, as defined in the literature (Greenwood, 1957) do not exist in the training area.(32) The lack of a nation-wide bureaucracy may partially explain this. In addition training does not seem to present a recognised expertise: it is not a discipline, not it is an established research field (Rose, 1976).

However, there are experts, managers of training centres, top civil servants, leading scholars and consultants who share a great deal of professional attitudes, although they may not form a professional

group. These attitudes are not concentrated in an identifiable body of professionals as in the case of groups such as teachers, doctors, architects, but are largely dispersed.

Three different settings are considered: the management of training bodies and related organisations, governmental policy machineries dealing with training and the research community. These professionals involved in this area do not form a pressure group; they are more a kind of elite.

The administrative structure, however complex and dispersed, needs managers in order to operate and develop. Examples are offered by those responsible for the private training bodies in Italy before regionalisation, those heading the ITBs, the "regional delegates" in France, the chief executive of MSC and the general manager of ISFOL.(33)

The second setting in which professional attitudes may develop is provided by machineries set up by the Government in policy formation and implementation. People who represent trade unions and employers or other interests are regularly consulted and become part of the policy community. The research community provides a setting for different kinds of expertise. The controversy in the Federal Republic of Germany about vocational training has been sustained by work done by social scientists (Hartman and Conrad, 1981:230). The building up of this type of intelligentsia (Kogan, 1971:44) takes place in culturally shaped and politically defined contexts; there are, therefore, substantial differences between one country and another. Educationists, economists and sometimes legal experts also contribute (34).

Generally this professional constituency (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:54), whether structured and centralized

or unstructured and dispersed, represents an element of continuity in the evolution of training policies.

The role of this intelligentsia is relevant in many respects, it works as a collective think-tank, and it crosses national borders. The measure of its political weight depends on its links with the organisation of training provision and its role in the policy process. The consultative and informative roles of the intelligentsia are extremely useful, but their views need to be put into practice by policy-makers. The intelligentsia, then, can range from being an opinion group as in Italy to being a strong network of top executives of MSC as in the United Kingdom.

This is another facet which shows the peculiarity of training as a policy area compared with others. There are elements of professionalism, but a proper professional constituency or the creation of specific professional groups is barely in evidence.

2.4.5 The Delivery System and the Implementation Structure

Policy analysts (Scharpf, 1978; Rainey and Milward, 1983) have ruled out simplified versions of the implementation studies and have emphasised the links between policy-making and policy-delivery. They have also developed approaches designed to incorporate the complex links previously ignored by organisational theory and public policy studies. They have tried to identify the units of analysis that are more often courses of action participated in by networks of organisations and entities rather than specific public organisations. This is particularly so in the case of the programme networks developed in some areas such as manpower training (Hanf, Hjern and Porter, 1978). As far as training is concerned, when its provision outside the school system is

considered, there are some obstacles in identifying the implementation process.

The absence of centralised units, the dispersion of responsibilities among various actors and the inter-organisational setting make it difficult to conceive of training policies in terms of means and ends.

A simple form of a top-down model of implementation could not work in this policy sector; unlike in other area of policy-making, the setting up of training provision is often based or dependent to some extent on voluntary action. The decision by an employer to offer an apprenticeship place may be facilitated, supported, sanctioned or stimulated by the Government or its agencies, but it remains a non-compulsory decision. Employers do not execute public policies, they basically pursue their own goals in an environment that the Government can, to some extent, influence. A training contract, an apprenticeship contract and a training course in a vocational school are outcomes of interaction among individuals and groups. Training policy means compromising the goals of different organisations and developing purposive action. A trainee or an apprentice is not a customer of a national service as are students in schools.

From this perspective, the local level is the crucial focus of analysis (Hjern and Porter, 1979); street-level interests are paramount. Here a variety of interests highlights the importance of compromise and of mechanisms which facilitate co-operation. A number of organisations are usually part of the delivery environment (Moon, 1983:329). Flexibility and local discretionary powers are necessary ingredients. The centre does not operate or fund programmes, but makes resources available to multi-purpose authorities (Ham and Hill, 1982 :104).

Governments have chosen to develop training policies by operating on implementation structures (Hjern and Porter, 1981) in the last fifteen years; this reflects a general trend towards a form of "indirect government". This perspective has several implications. Consensus among groups is a condition for action and the more groups there are the more is the consensus needed (Richardson, 1982:139).

Given this situation there is a need for mobilisation; purposive action must be promoted by those who take the lead in this process as in the case of the MSC in the United Kingdom.

There are many examples, in this area, of policy failure or implementation deficit (Ham and Hill, 1982:110), or policy erosion (Jordan and Richardson, 1979:143). For many years training courses for apprentices in Italy were not set up by the bodies responsible although apprenticeship contracts were currently signed (Vaciago, 1980:7). Part-time education for all young people from 15 to 18 year old is included in the 1918 Fisher Act (Finn, 1982:42) and special provision for day-release is contained in the 1944 Act but was never implemented (Prais, 1981:31-32). In the Federal Republic of Germany, compulsory attendance in part-time courses for young people under 18 but beyond full-time schooling, has encountered difficulties in being implemented (Winterhagen, 1980:38).

There may be a number of reasons for this situation. In explaining the lack of implementation or the relevance of implementation in the policy process some authors talk of symbolic policies (Ham and Hill, 1982:103) or of placebo policies (Finn, 1982a:41).

2.4.6 Consensual versus Conflict Configuration of Interests

Political scientists have coined various terms to refer to the "plurality of actors" (Scharf, 1978:347) in this policy process. These terms include pressure groups, issue groups, policy community, policy network, policy sub-system, iron triangle, policy sub-government.

In this section the role of interest and issue groups will be presented together with the global configuration and the dynamics of interest group intermediation. The configuration of the potential or actual interest groups in this area is not easy to identify. At first sight, the Government and what we have called the 'dominant interests (i.e. employers and trade unions) seem to be paramount, leaving little room for other game players. In fact, for each course of action or policy decision, there are a few sectional interests or groups as a result of the segmentation of the policy sector and of its administrative structure.

In Italy, for example, the private training bodies representing a solid interest group disintegrated after the regionalisation of the system (During the 1960's and the 1970's they were basically a clientele of the governmental bureaucracy sharing available resources on the basis of an informal agreement (35)). Subsequently, during the phase of decentralisation, the groups found it difficult to accommodate to the new situation and had to depend on Regional Governments' policies in this area; different alliances were formed along political lines.

In the United Kingdom, teachers' associations have contributed to the development of new policy directions for the training of the young. In addition civil servants exerted pressure on the Government (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:21) when the MSC had to be staffed.

Professional groups, such as Careers Officers, may well intervene in the policy formation

There are other ways in which interest factions arise. As has been pointed out above (Sect.2.4.1), training is seldom a top policy priority; it tends to be seen as being of secondary importance.(36) Larger issues encapsulate it. As a consequence, a major type of pressure group is that linked to special issues. Youth unemployment, for example, has given rise to many such interest groups and lobbies. These have not directly dealt with training, but some have included training claims in their campaigns. (see Chapter Five: Sect:5.3.1; Chapter Six: Sect:6.3.2)

In France, where a public policy does exist and where the system is highly organised, the arrangements of interest groups tend to be aligned politically. Employers, trade unions and relevant departments set the tone of policy-making. Other groups sometimes participate by preparing, supporting, defining problems or implementing measures. All of this tends to be through official channels (special agencies), within other formal settings for consultation or in the framework of national planning (see the French "Commissariat Général du plan" [planning Commission]).

Legislation and collective negotiation are the main patterns in a 'dirigiste' situation (Reynaud, 1981:263). In the Federal Republic of Germany, training is framed by the consensus or lack of consensus among social partners; it is a question of national policies to be dealt with at the federal and national level in conjunction with social partners.

2.5 VOCATIONAL TRAINING: POLICY ARENAS IN CONTEXT

This chapter has presented an approach which, it is argued, is useful for empirical research. It has pointed out some contextual features of the policy process in the sector of vocational training and illustrated these by referring to some specific cases drawn from West European countries.

According to this Chapter, an analysis of vocational training policies needs to ascertain the cultural and structural determinants of the policy arena (Sect. 2.2) and to verify the nature and the extent of Government involvement (Sect. 2.3). In addition, consideration has to be taken of the dimensions we have isolated (Sect.2.4): the second-order status of training issues in Government policies; the organisational complexity; the dominant interests; the elements of professionalism; the implementation structure and the process of influence. Rather than "hypotheses" to be tested they are assumptions about the policy process. It is their efficacy which has to be proved. Only this can indicate fruitful directions for empirical research.

In general terms, then, it becomes clear that vocational training policies do not exist in isolation. This is a policy arena with a loose institutional framework, generally shaped by the Government and social partners attitudes, but open to the influence from issue networks.(37) The dimensional approach can provide a grid for empirical research and offer new insights in an area of study, which has been largely neglected and which is frequently characterised by descriptive surveys. It provides a way of reformulating long-standing questions about the training systems. One of these questions concerns the problem of a prevailing national

particularism. In light of the analysis developed in the previous pages, it remains to be explored whether the policy making process is nationally bounded. This is the topic of the next chapter.

NOTES

(1) The distinction between 'general' and 'vocational' education is commonly accepted (OECD, 1976:28-29) and is used in the classification of types of education. It is very difficult to define and specify 'vocational education' or training outside the school system. Here it seems not possible to reach a systematic definition. As an example an attempt by the EC led to include the following items as training outside the school system: "1. Apprenticeship as defined in national legislation; 2. all other initial vocational training which takes place outside the school system, other than apprenticeship; 3. all vocational training courses for adults (including retraining; excluding training organised by general Government for its own officials, officers and other employees); 4. vocational training as part of retraining schemes; 5. several training courses outside the school system; 6. training organised by general government for their own officials, officers and other employees" (EEC, Education and Training, 1981).

(2) The process of definition may involve conflicting views; in this respect 'vocational training' is a "contested concept", i.e. one of those concepts which "inevitably involve endless dispute about their proper uses on the part of their users" (Gallie, W.B., "Essentially Contested Concepts" in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* [1955-1956]:167-8; reported in Lukes, 1974:26).

(3) For the need to bring culture back in the analysis of contemporary societies, see Maurice, 1977; Sorge, 1979.

(4) See IMS, 1984:1.

(5) For additional discussion on these words see Chapter Five; Chapter Six and Chapter Seven.

(6) See the long-standing debate about the historical relationship between education and industry in the United Kingdom (Roderick and Stephens, 1978) and between the systems of education and the economic performance (Prais, 1981; Daly, 1982).

(7) While dealing with education and training terminology, Entiwistle made the following remark: "Training sometimes carries pejorative overtones because it is a term commonly applied to teaching tricks to animals. Teacher Training Colleges were redesignated 'Colleges of Education' largely because of this unfortunate association of the word 'training' with animal-learning situation." (1970:52)

(8) It is worthwhile noticing that in the 1981 Manpower Services Commission Glossary of Training Terms, there is no mention of "industrial training"; other expressions such as "vocational preparation" and "unified vocational preparation" are listed instead. (MSC, 1981f)

(9) For an overall view see Giugni, 1977; Vaciago, 1980; Valentini, 1982. See also Chapter Six.

(10) From the historical point of view 'officium' or 'ministerium' in Latin, 'métier' or 'jurande' in French, 'arte' in Italian, 'ambacht' or 'neering' in the Netherlands, 'Amt', 'Innung', 'Zunft' or 'Handwerk' in German, craft-guild or mistery in English provide a diversity of name for the same institution of the craft-guilds.

(11) The "societal effect approach" is "a systematic analysis of social action which emphasizes the interconnections between different social spheres like manufacturing, industrial relations, education and training" (Maurice, Sorge and Warner, 1979:4; see also Maurice and Sellier, 1979; Sorge, 1979; Kraiss, 1979).

(12) The definition of the situation by policy actors is a component of the policy process. This has been investigated by the subjectivistic approaches, i.e. those "methodological approaches to the study of the policy process which give primacy of place to the perceptions, social constructions, assumptions or 'world views' of key actors in the policy making process and which have their foundation in phenomenological and ethnomethodological sociology and, more particularly, in the notion of grounded theory". (Edwards, 1981:290)

(13) Ramirez and Meyer assess the situation concerning the educational differentiation in these terms: "What factors affect the degree of differentiation of an education system? There is little comparative empirical work on the question, aside from the general finding that educational differentiation tends to reflect societal differentiation" (1981). They suggest two kinds of factors: social organization and ideology; and they point out that the organization of education reflects characteristics arising from the system's period of

origin. For the scope of State education monopoly in a comparative perspective see Heidenheimer, Heclo and Adams, 1983:22.

(14) See the political relevance of the 1967 Act (n.36) in Italy this provided for resources to be allocated to private training bodies operating on a national scale and the subsequent 1975 Act (n.382) ended this financing arrangement (Valentini, 1982:76).

(15) The situation appears clearer nowadays when: "most OECD countries have made a major political commitment to providing extensive opportunities for vocational education and training" (OECD, 1983:10).

(16) In Italy it was during the 1970's that policy perspectives emerged and gave rise to a huge legislative effort at both national and regional level.

(17) All figures must be interpreted with caution because of the different meanings of the terms used ("education" and "training"), the different structures of the education and training systems and the lack of long-standing use of data in this area. In 1978, for the first time, data were made available by the Statistical Service of the EC. In this context the data are used in order to outline the differences amongst countries in terms of the Governments' involvement.

(18) See the following table.

Tab. 2.2 - Government Total Expenditure (1978)

	FRG	France	Italy	UK
School and University				
Gen.Education	83.8	71.8	96.7	91.9
Voc.Training	9.8	21.2	1.4	--
Outside school and University				
Gen.Education	1.1.	--	--	--
Voc.Training	5.3	7.0	1.9	8.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: EuroStat, Education and Training 1(1982), 2.

(19) Several other political categories have implications for training, such as 'privatisation', 'corporatism' and 'decentralisation' (Brown and Fairley, 1987). They need to be investigated by further research.

(20) See about framework legislation in Italy, Valentini, 1982:80. See for the relationship between legislation and collective negotiation Reynaud, 1981:259; Varesi, 1983:130f. See for comment on the type of action undertaken by the French Government in the case of the youth unemployment policy, Garraud, 1985. See also legislation in the FRG (Vocational Promotion Act, 1969; Employment Promotion Act, 1969; Act on the Promotion of Training Places, 1976).

(21) The French system of vocational training is often referred to as a classic case of a school-centred pattern; however, it is a rather mixed system in which vocational education in schools, apprenticeship and Government-sponsored further training and retraining co-exist.

(22) Becker (1982) notes the persistence of the same unresolved policy issues concerning the United States Government's involvement over the last sixty years.

(23) In France, art.1 (Law of 3.11.1966 of orientation and programming of vocational training) proclaims that vocational training constitutes a national obligation.

(24) In Italy Legge n.264 29.4.1949; in the United Kingdom the Education Act 1944.

(25) See the analysis by Fairley and Grahl (1983) of the political objectives pursued by the Conservative Government in the United Kingdom. Grubb (1984) has discussed the presentation of vocational education as a panacea in front of social and economic problems.

(26) In this context the notion of complexity is not based on the levels of hierarchy. In a multi-organisational setting the hierarchy has to be reconsidered (Hjern and Porter, 1979:20-21) and bargaining is often more important than hierarchy; dependence is, moreover, reciprocal. Complexity is mentioned in Anderson and Fairly (1982); Ridley (1984:62ff); La Porte (ed.) (1975). See Sect.2.4.5.

(27) The 'basic vocational course' provides basic vocational education at the end of compulsory schooling; aims, contents and organisation vary from one Government (Laender) to another. In some cases it is used as the first year in apprenticeship. See Lauglo, 1983:299; Von Domnanyi, 1978.

(28) It must be noted that administration arrangements and their change are dependent on broader trends. In Italy, for instance, there was decentralisation and in the United Kingdom, the process of "hiving-off". In

France as Ridley points out:

"One of the innovations of public administration in post-war France has been the creation of small dynamic single-goal administrative agencies outside the traditional ministerial structure." (1979:14)

(29) See in the UK the number of Department interested in training, the relationship between the MSC and the Treasury, the DE, the DES and the ITBs (Anderson and Fairley, 1983; Stringer and Richardson, 1982:34-38; Finn: 1982a:47. In Italy the relationship between the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Employment and Regional Governments (Pagnoncelli, 1979:190). In the FRG the relationship between the Federal Government and the 'Laender' (Winterhagen, 1980:31).

(30) See the case of the "150 ore" a case of educational leave (hundred and fifty hours) based on a collective agreement between employers and trade unions mainly used, under trade unions pressure, for general education and not linked to further training or retraining (Delai, 1977; Colasanto, 1978:121). There have been, however, cases of co-operation between trade unions and employers in the past (Varesi, 1983:139).

(31) In Britain industrial relations are centred at the factory level, in the Federal Republic of Germany there is co-determination. Italy has none of the following: the co-determination, a tradition of shop-steward representation, organised enterprise unionism as in Japan or USA, neither the sectoral and regional industrial relations framework as in France.

(32) Greenwood considers authority, systematic theory, community sanctions, ethical codes as attributes of a profession (quoted in Ham and Hill, 1982:143).

(33) It is worthwhile noticing the minor role played by teachers in Italy. The first union agreement for instructors and teachers operating in the sector of "formazione professionale" was reached in 1971; afterwards teachers have been pressing to enter the newly-born public sector (Valentini, 1982:74; 82).

(34) Economists appear to have been the most relevant discipline-oriented group in France and in Italy. In 1980 De Maupou-Abboud assessed the French situation saying: "Today most of the studies, theoretical or empirical about training practices in firms are carried out by economists. Whatever is their theoretical orientation, an economist view about training is dominant; training practices are analysed on the basis of their profitability". (1980:174)

(35) See the analysis by Amato of the "allotment system" (1976).

(36) In Italy the vocational training system ("formazione professionale") has become during the 1950's and 1960's a parallel or "second-chance" school system for deprived youth or drop-outs from the school (Colasanto, 1978). This is one of the reason of the long-term involvement of religious bodies in this area.

(37) Another aspect is worth mentioning. Kogan maintain that: "if a policy is continuous it can be asked whether this is because it relates to values that can be regarded as immutable in society...or whether it is intrinsically no more "external" or axiomatic than others, but has found support in either a strong institutional fabric such as a system of government or administration, or in a strong profession." (1975:55). These factors of continuity seem to be rather weak in the vocational training policy sector.

CHAPTER THREE

EUROPEAN AND INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES

3.1 BROADENING THE CONVENTIONAL BOUNDARIES

Governments, as the main focus of interest for political scientist and policy analysts, are generally nation-based. Policy studies are, therefore, mainly centred on nations as units of analysis: the working of policy communities is placed within national boundaries and policy environments tend to be nationally circumscribed.

There are at least three risks inherent in this current delimitation. First, it may lead to too sharp a distinction between domestic policy-making and international relations as if they were two discrete areas. It is not uncommon to find studies and descriptions of policy processes without reference to international factors (Jordan, 1981; Ham and Hill, 1982). Second, it fosters unrealistic assumptions about the autonomy and self-sufficiency of national system. Third, it ignores or minimises the complex web of relationships among policy processes taking place at the national level. Cross-national policy processes are very often absent in policy studies: policy diffusion and borrowing processes are not usually part of the conceptual instruments used in the analysis of national policies.

There is substantial evidence in many fields of research that international relations deeply affect national policy-making and some studies indicate that a search for links among national systems is widely needed (Walker, 1969; Gourevitch, 1978; Taylor-Gooby, 1981:7). The interdependence of national and international factors in the economic policy area is widely supported by research findings and embedded in general theories. It has also been pointed out that deep-rooted national traditions do not prevent cross-national trends in the development of education systems nor the emergence of

common education policy objectives among countries (Beck, 1970; Inkeless and Sirowy, 1983).

Among political scientists there is growing interest in the interconnections between domestic politics and international relations. The EC literature is testimony to this. Early theoretical schemes which were based on the concept of 'integration' and developed in the past by eminent authors (Haas, 1958; Linberg and Scheingold, 1970) have been frequently criticised (Webb, 1977; Taylor, 1983; Bulmer, 1983) for a lack of empirical evidence, for being the result of ill-founded generalisations and for focusing on the workings of central institutions rather than on processes of influence and interdependence. During the past ten years, the need to analyse actual policy-making processes, the usefulness of case studies instead of overall approaches and a sceptical stance towards grandiose theories have defined the implicit guidelines for a new wave of research (Rosenthal, 1975; Wallace, Wallace and Webb (eds), 1977; Sasse, Poulet, Coombes and Deprez, 1977; Laffan, 1983; Bulmer, 1983). The consequent alternative to the 'supranational' versus 'intergovernmentalism' debate (See Chapter Eight:Sect.8.2) in the EC policy studies (Pinder, 1975; Bulmer, 1983:35) emphasises the policy-making process, the interaction between domestic politics and the EC policy-making (Laffan, 1983) and the importance of national Governments (Bulmer, 1983).(1)

In the context of this development, vocational training has not been considered a worthwhile area of enquiry. As a result, the existing research resources include a theoretical and widely criticised legacy from the past, few attempts to improve old paradigms and a felt need for a more empirical orientation. They are far from adequate to apply to vocational training, which is radically different from agricultural and monetary

sectors and whose international bearings remain largely unknown.

In the light of this it would be hazardous to take for granted the conventional boundaries still governing the literature on vocational training. This chapter continues the investigation initiated in Chapter Two by exploring the role of the international environment in the construction of vocational training policies.

While non-domestic factors have not figured significantly in previous research, this investigation attempts to examine the relevance of international influences. A start can be made by considering the persistence of traditional structures of training provision and the apparent national "particularism" in the face of a wide and advanced process of the internationalisation of policy-making.

There are four sections here. The first discusses the usefulness and the shortcomings of the 'national uniqueness approach' and convergence theory in analysing vocational training policies. The second outlines the need for a policy approach; the third presents lines along which international influences are likely to be exerted. The fourth calls for conceptual devices for framing processes of contact and influence, or the lack of these, among national courses of action.

France, Italy and the United Kingdom are part of the European Community. This chapter refers both to these countries experience and to EC actions related to vocational training. It aims at developing middle-range generalisations while pursuing an hermeneutic reconstruction of vocational training policies.

3.2 NATIONAL UNIQUENESS AND CONVERGENCE THEORY

A trait common to both national and cross-national surveys is an holistic posture: training arrangements are portrayed on national bases and viewed as discrete phenomena. The 'uniqueness' and the 'originality of each system' (European Centre, 1980a:2) are the basic assumptions in many international reports and the presentation of "national patterns" is their main outcome (See Chapter One: Note 2). Frequent attempt are made using case-study and ideal-type approaches in order to isolate the essence of national systems of training; in addition current typologies (Gregoire, 1967; Drouet, 1967) contrast school-based patterns to industry-based models of training (See Chapter One: Sect.4).

The need for a global understanding and an integrated view of what is happening in various countries has led to attempts to uncover common avenues of change. By choosing an appropriate level of categorisation, surveys have been carried out on "lifelong education and training" and "innovation in further and continuing training" (2) Several types of education and training are included under such broad conceptual umbrellas.

As a result there are two alternative positions in the current literature. The first points out national uniqueness, the second presents commonalities. There are many examples of this dual approach. In an OECD report the balance between the particularism of national situations and the existing commonalities is presented as follows:

"It is difficult to define trends in a type of education which is organised in very different ways according to country and in some countries marked by widely varying levels and

qualities...Certain common trends however, emerge from these more detailed discussions." (1976:66)

Reubens (1979) has depicted the substantial differences among countries. However, while discussing measures (many of which include training) adopted by countries to deal with youth unemployment, she notes that:

"Without copying directly from one another, countries arrive at the same list of alternatives. There are few programmes that are novel or unknown elsewhere." (1980:126)

Sorge concludes a survey of education and training for micro-electronic technology with the following remark:

"It shows commonalities between EC countries in the increasing penetration of micro-electronics and information-processing contents into existing training schedules and schemes and it also highlights national differences in training policies." (1981:1)

These current views (OECD, 1979a:60-61; Reubens, 1982:69; Therborn, 1986:39f; Johnson, 1987:30) are not the outcome of rigorous analytical research. Rather, they are embedded in the surveys and reports promoted by national agencies and international organisations and govern conventional thinking. However, there are theoretical bases for the two alternative positions. The first - national uniqueness - fits in well with a model of analysis which centres on "culture" and national particularism. The second - the common trends perspective - finds support in the convergence theory. Through these theoretical frameworks it becomes possible to scrutinise in depth the underlying assumptions of the two current positions.

It is argued here that these two views and their theoretical backgrounds provide a picture at a general

level of what is happening in more than one country. However, they do not provide an adequate framework for unravelling the international scope of policy processes and for providing a full account of ongoing interaction and influence among national policy systems.

(a) National Uniqueness and Vocational Training

By national particularism we mean the persistence of national patterns in spite of growing similarities among countries (Elder, 1976:210-213). They present unique features which make the search for equivalent institutional arrangements in different countries fruitless. In a recent report concerning education and training provision in Japan, Federal Republic of Germany, United States and United Kingdom, the authors say:

"In a sense each of the countries is unique. Each has its 'culture' of shared assumptions and values which also find their expression in their vocational education and training and in institutional arrangements, and in the type of data they collect". (IMS, 1984:1)

Vocational training is ultimately idiosyncratic: each country appears to have found its own approach. The various solutions adopted are illustrated by the current typologies ("training as in-school function", "firm-centred training", "part-time versus full-time training", "apprentice versus student status"...) (Drouet, 1968). Although they merely depict the tip of the iceberg at the crossing of social, economic and political factors, they pretend to isolate the 'essences' and to discard the 'accidentals' of national systems of training. Many studies are undertaken from this perspective: they focus on national uniqueness and cross-national contrasts.

From a historical point of view, it is possible to illustrate the shaping and the formation of "national patterns". A complementary perspective stems from an

institutional and structural point of view (Sorge and Warner, 1980). A basic concept developed in this context is that of "professionalism" which pulls together the various strands behind vocational training arrangements. Maurice and Sellier maintain:

"By degree of professionalism, we mean the extent to which a set of activities is organized into a full-time occupation and taught in a systematic training schedule."
(1979:344)

National patterns form the settings for policy-making. As a consequence, it is often assumed that policies will be inevitably different, and sometimes divergent. This has implications for the way in which the overall situation is depicted: a cross-national overview appears to be characterised by a sort of anarchical patchwork of different colours which may well be considered as a natural workshop. In a report by the European Centre it is explicitly recognised that the variety of solutions could be useful for decision-makers:

"After three months of activity and research, we have realised that the real task of the European Community is not to hide the peculiarities of each individual country, but to appreciate their individual features through the comparison among countries and the study of their differences in the area of training and employment. Useful lessons for everybody could be drawn from this." (European Centre, 1979a:1)

Another avenue for considering the situation in different countries is to find out relevant policy options as they arise in each. Thus, cross-national contrasts are used to identify the range of variation of arrangements and policy options. This perspective is widespread in international surveys (IMS, 1984).

Within this particularistic perspective individual countries are generally taken as separate entities and

the interactive effects are rarely mentioned as factors potentially explaining recorded trends. Moreover no generalizations are drawn from the data.

(b) Convergence Theory and Training

Behind the identification of common trends and common directions of change there is an unspoken assumption that convergence is the common pattern. According to convergence theory, the logic of industrialisation results in nations becoming more and more alike. Different cultural and historical legacies and various political and economic systems do not prevent this happening. Convergence theory, whose origins are implicit in the works of many 19th century social and political theorists (Marx, Spencer, Toennies) has been developed by various scholars (Kerr, Dunlop, Harbison and Myers, 1964; Nielsson, 1978)). It has also been applied in relation to several sectors: social welfare (Mishra, 1973; Wilensky, 1975; Williamson and Fleming, 1977), education and health services.(3)

Mishra (1973) argues that highly-industrialised countries are convergent more in technological areas than in others. Therefore, convergence could be expected in the education sector - this sector being tied to the needs of a technological-based system. This position is based on a type of technological determinism and it supports the view of change in training systems as a process of spontaneous approximation (Fragniere, 1982:7). There are, however, several difficulties with this approach.

Industrialisation and modernisation did not have a standardised effect on training in Europe. Each country appears to have developed its own approach in this area. This is consistent with evidence from other countries. A comparison of training arrangements in Japan and in the

Federal Republic of Germany confirms that economic progress requires training, but not a specific form of training. It seems that the type of political and economic system not just the level of economic advancement is a factor explaining differences between countries (Inkeless and Sirowy, 1983:317). Economic growth requires an appropriate skilled labour force. This general requirement is satisfied in different ways in the countries considered here. Convergence theory, therefore, is useful in the analysis of training, but can only partially explain it (4). Useful insights however, are gained from an application of the convergence theory to education.

Inkeless and Sirowy conclude their systematic assessment of whether and how far national educational systems are becoming more alike by maintaining that, although divergent and parallel changes do appear:

"In the light of the evidence we have presented it is clear that the tendency for national educational systems to converge on common structures and practices is pervasive and deep. It is manifested at all levels of the educational system, and affects virtually every major aspect of that system." (1983:326)

While investigating the reasons for such trends the two authors refer to factors such as "imperatives built into the socio-technical systems", "the process of borrowing", "the integration in networks of influence through which ideas and social forms are diffused", "the moral forces of international organisations", and "the pervasive efforts of experts and technical consultants". A specific case of convergence is analysed by Beck (1970) regarding the harmonisation of education in Europe.

The two theories - a "culture" approach and convergence theory - are not satisfactory. First, for a consideration of the way in which training is constructed

at the national level, both approaches are too simplistic. Training systems do not present a monolithic feature. They are rather the outcome of a building process with various components. Any view of the national system of vocational training in terms of a prevailing pattern tends, therefore, to be misleading. A more detailed approach is necessary. Second, changes are incremental and piecemeal and what could be seen prima facie as the persistence of traditional arrangements may appear on closer analysis as a dynamic change. A more detailed study will also help understand change in that it will highlight not just episodes of convergence but various forms of change: parallel development, partial convergence, invariance, and divergence. A caveat for cross-national studies stems from the ways in which changes come about. What appears to be a common trend is sometimes made up of changes that have different meanings and are incorporated differently in their own context. Third, in both cases it seems that there is a prevailing static view of training. There is little consideration of the policy-making process. Few attempts are made to grasp the effects of interaction among nations (Collier and Messick, 1975:1300; Elder, 1976, 217).(5) As a result, actions by international organisations and the process of diffusion are not directly tackled. The two perspectives identify forces pulling in opposite directions, but do not cover the entire field.

3.3 TOWARDS AN ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The two approaches presented in the previous section do not provide a satisfactory framework for analysing actions taking place in a cluster of countries. This highlights the need for a new paradigm (Freeman,

1985:449). Prior to the development of a satisfactory conceptual scheme, the focus of attention itself must be clearly and accurately specified. First, domestic and international dimensions are not viewed as opposing and competing sets of intervening factors. Nor is there a need for some kind of one-way, linear or causal explanation, nor for a quest for a prime mover.(6) The interest is primarily in the complex network of factors that are interwoven and operate at both the national and international level. Second, policy machineries more than long-term trends or developments have to be taken into account .

Areas of study exist where the influence of constituent variables is evident. In others, such as vocational training, the amount and the relevance of interaction among countries appear to be minimal; there is no formal structure of dependency nor a self-evident form of interdependency. An investigation of training, then, is bound to be piecemeal and diffuse. Such an investigation has to look for indirect and implicit ways of influence or the lack of these. The roots of national dimensions have been depicted in Chapter two. The crucial set of questions (See Chapter One:Sect.1.4) here is:

1. What kind of contacts and links exist among national policy systems? Are policy formation processes completely isolated? What pattern of contact and interaction exist among policy actors operating in different countries?
2. What place does training occupy in policy-making at the extra-national level? Is training a policy issue at the international level?

The answers to these questions could indicate the extent to which it is plausible to think only in terms of national dimensions in such a policy area. The problem is how to approach a loose and vague situation that has been

widely neglected by policy analysts and where there is little evidence of European or international influences.

It is widely documented in the literature that ideas and policy practices are spread across nations. Policies borrow from one another. Diffusion is a short-cut or expedient way of making policy. Officials of one country are in contact with others; communications circulate and cross national barriers. Therefore what is happening elsewhere is relevant to domestic policy-making. There is, in short, an international environment for domestic policies.

This context may be examined from different perspectives: as an international policy environment, as a network of links among national policy-making systems, as the presence of supranational actors.

Training is basically a national domain. Therefore European and international factors are not evident at first sight. However, the aspects that call for a broader perspective are numerous:

1. Decision-makers appear to be well-informed about what is happening in other countries.
2. There are extra-national decision-making processes and sources of resources for training (e.g. the European Social Fund).
3. All the main policy actors are involved in some form of policy process beyond national boundaries.
4. There are experts who move from one country to another.
5. There are issues that are common to more than one country.

All these aspects do not cover the entire area of training policies; some are sporadic and occasional and do not form part of long-term established policy

machineries; however, they lead us to assume that there are contacts and potential influences.

In addition to this, training decisions are not taken in a vacuum but are rooted in structural settings. There are background constraints which derive from economic change. The integration of economies, the presence of multinationals, the spread of common technologies, and the existence of professional mobility are all factors that may lead to an unplanned and natural outgrowth of common interests and efforts in this area. The effect of these influences upon different training systems and policies has remained unexplored; however, the existence of this influence places national training policies in an international context.

Portraying the contact between policies and unveiling the structure of influence are undoubtedly difficult in the area of training. Vocational training has previously been considered primarily as a domestic policy issue. The salience and the scope of vocational training as an international policy area has hardly been an item of research in policy studies (Wedell, 1982). The prevalence of national patterns in the structure of training systems and the marginal place of training in the international policy spheres can help in understanding why training policy has been an unexplored field while other adjacent areas such as industrial, social and economic policies have more often attracted the attention of scholars of international relations (Wallace, Wallace and Webb, 1977)

The available conceptual and methodological frameworks have not presented an incentive to approach this topic in a systematic way. Past and current theories on European integration and policy-making, research undertaken on the influence of international factors on domestic policies, and comparative devices applied in the study of training

systems seem not to have successfully identified specific problems related to vocational training and provided appropriate paradigms for their treatment.

International relations and domestic politics are two branches of political science with different points of view (Gourevitch, 1978:881). Both can, in principle, advance some basic questions. This can be done either by searching the international sources of domestic policies or by developing a domestic politics approach (Bulmer, 1983) to international policy-making.

Few attempts have been made to develop these questions in the area of vocational training and those which exist are satisfactory. In her study of the European Social Fund, for instance, D.Collins tries to answer the crucial question:

"...whether there has been any significant change in British training policies as a result of the existence of a European Fund to which the UK is entitled to apply for financial assistance" (Collins, 1983:2)

However, as vocational training has mainly been considered a "nation-based" policy area it is difficult to weigh the relevance of international factors. Most of them are not self-evident; they operate in an indirect way or are embedded in complex patterns of interaction. In the end, their importance tends to diminish when compared with the role of more relevant domestic factors. Thus, the search for their impact on national policies leads to conclusions which, in our view, are not of great interest. Collins concludes her work by saying:

"The British experience returns a rather uncertain answer to the question of whether there is now more and better training that

there otherwise would have been, suggesting that on balance the increase is probably slight and that alterations in type of training are marginal." (Collins, 1983:101)

Not dissimilarly, in her study of patterns of interaction among actors involved in the working of the European Social Fund, Laffan reaches this conclusion:

"The European Social Fund...remains a financial instrument which complements national expenditure in the field of vocational training, rather than an instrument that can direct national policies." (Laffan, 1983:407-8)

There is a need for a more sophisticated approach which seeks to find out and describe patterns of interaction between the two levels of action (international and domestic).

3.4 POLICY INFLUENCE

National policy systems are not monolithic and omnipotent structures: they are made of segments that may operate with a varied degree of autonomy. In addition, no Government exist in splendid isolation, independent of the international community.

An overview of the international environment for national training policies appears somewhat impressionistic. We agree with the remark made by Wallace about the study of policy-making at the international level. This author says:

"In entering the international arena of policy-making we find many fleeting shadows but little of apparent substance." (1984:129)

Here some dimensions that are identified are relevant to the countries under investigation and are not necessarily applicable to others. At the same time the EC system is viewed not only in terms of European integration or according to the Community method (7) but also in terms of 'an ongoing political system with its own dynamics (elite linkages, institutional performance...)' (Averyt, 1975).

By identifying these dimensions this research does not pretend to limit the richness of causal networks, but only to specify the enlarged boundaries of the policy area we are interested in and to pinpoint some crucial issues illustrated in the literature.

3.4.1 International Comparisons in Policy Formulation

The investigation of foreign experience has become part of policy formation. As Parker notes:

"Governments investigate the systems and procedures of other countries, particularly when new developments in social policy are under consideration." (1983)

and

"Pressure groups and promotional bodies may cite foreign examples and employ comparative statistics in order to justify what they propose." (1983)

Knowledge based on what is happening elsewhere is a common input in policy-making (see the list of publications by ISFOL where about 10% concerns international comparison). It is quite usual at the national level to find a kind of "comparative understanding" of other countries' systems. In the area of training the "comparative attitude" has a long history (Smail, 1914) and the input of foreign experience in the

policy debate has been noted by scholars (Richardson and Henning, 1984:4). As early as in 1923, Marshall wrote that:

"All the world has much to learn from German method of education". (1923)

There are countries which play the role of reference example for others or which act as a magnet in the international debate. In this context there are frequent attempts to point out the development of new policies as an approximation process among national varieties of training arrangements. For instance, while discussing the recent scheme for young people (Youth Training Scheme) launched in the United Kingdom, Jones observes that:

"This appears as a move towards the German system of obligatory part-time vocational training for all school leavers." (1982:71).

While comparing the evolution of training in different countries, Prais notes that:

"The systems of vocational training in many European countries (Netherlands, Switzerland, Sweden and, more recently, France) have become increasingly similar to that of Germany". (Prais, 1981:59)

This "invaluable lesson from abroad" (Parker, 1983:5) is often included in the formative stage of a policy and it tends to show existing policy options. As an employers' representative in the Managing Board of the European Centre put it:

"...competition, so to speak, between a variety of nation systems can in the course of time strengthen the positive aspects of each system". (Brumhard, 1979:3)

From a policy point of view, it is important to take into consideration the fact that comparison is common practice in policy-making. As Fragnière notes:

"It has now become common practice for one country, once a project aimed at the reform or development of specified streams of training has been launched in another country, to initiate an enquiry on experience gained by that other country in order to itself find new avenues of approach." (1982:9)

Promoting a comparative view has been formulated as an institutional task of the European Centre. However, it is not sic et simpliciter originated and motivated by a search for information but it may play different roles. "Informed opinion" and research findings are used in the policy arena. Cross-national surveys broaden views. Sometimes they serve political purposes (Parker, 1983) in providing a bases for recommendation (IMS, 1984). However these findings and surveys may also spread either a ritualistic and simplified version of policies in other countries, thus consolidating stereotypes. This is particularly likely in cases such as training because of the lack of in-depth studies.

3.4.2 Policy Diffusion

In his article about policy diffusion among the Commonwealth countries Leichter maintains that:

"Diffusion is a political routine, a short-cut or expedient way of making policy" (Leichter, 1983:229)

There has been a considerable amount of research on diffusion. Some scientists have concentrated on the origins and the motivations of policy diffusion. In considering the conditions in which borrowing processes are likely to happen, Leichter (1983:228ff) identifies a

set of relevant situations. These include the challenge stemming from "new and unique (to them) situations, requiring a policy response", "issues that involve some degree of urgency", and "formative stages of policy making". Other scholars have pointed out the existence of "common goals, common problems, common needs" (Beck, 1970:191) and the "spreading of necessity" (Eyestone, 1977:446) as favourable conditions for diffusion.

There are several patterns of diffusion. Policy diffuses along the lines of international affiliations. Similarities in conditions and problems and frequent interaction among officials of neighbouring units support the sharing of public policies and political practices among neighbours.

Diffusion tends to be in new rather than in existing areas. This process takes place in areas that are common to countries such as technological developments, teacher training, unemployment, manpower policies and job creation. Obstacles to the process come from national particularism. The adoption of a policy takes place in a specific context and it leads to its re-interpretation.

Historically the apprenticeship system was diffused throughout Medieval Europe, but subsequently the structuring of national systems seems to have prevented large scale processes of diffusion. This does not however rule out the possibility of future diffusion and some recent development could be explored in this perspective.

3.4.3 "Harmonisation of Training Policies"(8)

The literature indicates that international environment is significantly affected by the presence of

supranational bodies or intergovernmental organisations (See Chapter Eight). The countries chosen in this research as reference cases are all within the EC (9). EC institutions have on different occasions expressed their concern with training matters. For example, art.128 of the Treaty of Rome and institutional commitment through the setting up of a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training have both substantially enriched the web of interaction among EC member states.

However, within the policy processes activated by EC institutions, training is a relatively marginal sector - one where there are not usually "vital national interests". It is a consequence of freedom of movement of the labour force and it falls in the field of social policy, an area where there has always been a lack of "political will" (i.e. converging pressure by the national Governments) to harmonise the different national systems. This results from differences in costs and arrangements for training the various countries. But vocational training is frequently addressed as an issue. Harmonisation of training (10) and education systems (EEC, 1964:12), approximation of training levels or 'common vocational training policy' are some of the phrases used in the EC circles to indicate the European approach to training.

The bases for action in the EC are judicial (the provision by the Treaty of Rome for a common vocational training policy), political (the agreement inside the European Council) and are influenced by current issues such as unemployment. There have been guidelines, principles, directives, action programmes, recommendations, and pilot schemes focused on training. The effects of such efforts have never been fully assessed; and conflicting views exist on these effects. Some commentators are convinced of the irrelevance of

this policy sector in EC policy, others talk of the "limited effects" of the EC action pointing out its "flanking role" (EEC, 1973:6). Still others keep alive the hope of a spontaneous and gradual approximation of such differing systems and policies. None seems to object to the role of the EC in this field.

By taking into account the structure and the functioning of EEC institutions and the level of sectoralisation of the policy process (11), it is necessary to look at EC training policy not just as an example of general policy trends or patterns of action. Moreover, training is not part of "high politics" and is generally not considered by many commentators or policy specialists.

Two contexts of influence can be identified: the making of a supranational policy (Wallace, 1984) and the interaction among national administrators, interest groups and EEC institutions, i.e. the "patterns of channel which link 'Brussels' with various grass-roots constituencies in the EEC member states" (Bush and Puchala, 1976:237).

3.4.4 Subsidy Policy and Policy Influence

Some policy making processes at the EC level are based on financial inducement. They are operated through grants from the main funds of the Community. The European Social Fund was set up in order to increase the possibilities of employment for workers in the Common Market. It has existed since 1962 and underwent major reform in 1971 with an increased number of area of intervention. It is both an instrument for dealing with the need for adaptation and an attempt to achieve a degree of compatibility among national training policies. The ESF

shares a small part of EC funds, although it was increased during the 1970's. Successive reforms have modified the rules and regulations concerning the working of the fund itself. The importance of the fund and its influence upon national policies is not clear (Coates and Wallace, 1984:177).(12)

There are, however, policy processes and complex interplays between EC institutions and national and subnational entities. First, although it is difficult to assess in terms of efficacy, it is undeniable that the European Social Fund affects national policies. Laffan poses the question in this way:

"The importance of the European Social Fund varies from country to country. In 1976 it was estimated that it provided 5-10 per cent of the total training budgets of the member states. The Fund has been of particular importance to Ireland and the Mezzogiorno as these are classed as priority regions and they benefit from a higher rate of intervention. Our research in Ireland indicates that the European Social Fund provides 40-50 per cent of total current expenditure for training and job creation measures for young people. In Britain, the Fund has acted as a useful resource base for the Manpower Services Commission during a period of cut-backs in public expenditure. Even for countries like the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and France where ESF is marginal, it has been significant for certain beneficiaries such as women and migrant workers." (1983:399)

Despite this marginal utility of the Fund and the implications of this, there are policy processes (Laffan, 1983:394ff; Sargent, 1985) that take place and that may well be depicted. There are two main factors in this respect. The first is the fact that the ESF does not operate on the bases of a quota system as is the case of the Regional Fund (resources are divided among member states on a proportional basis). The second is mismatch between available resources and applications. Among the

processes that affect the policy-making we include: the definition of guidelines for the management of the Fund by the European Commission; the creation of consensus within the Committee of the ESF made up of national delegations representing central Governments and social partners); change in traditional approaches within national contexts in order to meet the requirements of the ESF - maximising the return of national money by getting funds -, and discretion exercised by EC officials for the allocation of resources.

There are other situations where it may be assumed that policy processes at the national level (both in terms of 'clientele relationship' (Laffan, 1983:398) between EC Commission and national actors are involved. For example, ENAIP, an Italian private training organisation, appears to have survived the structural change and the administrative rearrangements of the training system in Italy by obtaining funds from the ESF (Valentini, 1982). In addition, the substantial amount of money involved requires major policy decisions in its allocation.

Although it is difficult to work out its accuracy it is worthwhile reporting what Mr H. Vredeling, vice-president of the European Commission and Commissioner for Social Affairs, said at the opening of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training:

"If we compare European resources devoted to vocational training and resources devoted by Member States, we see large differences. In Ireland, for instance, about one third of vocational training costs is funded by the European Social Fund. In Italy European contribution cover one fifth, in Belgium and United Kingdom, one tenth. In the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Denmark and Luxemburg only one twentieth is financed by the European aid". (1977:2)

The positions of national policy makers vary from the need to recover consolidated costs ("dead weight" for the Fund) to a request for innovation (Medusa, 1979). It is evident that the discussion is well beyond the question of whether or not the Fund helps the process of arranging a common vocational training policy. The power of the purse (Coombes and Wiebecke, 1972) is a component of European policy-making and from this point of view the Social Fund is different from the other European funds (Coates and Wallace, 1984:180).

3.4.5 Cognitive Mobilisation

According to a subjectivistic approach (Edwards, 1981) policy processes are linked to the definition of the situation. In many policy sectors, the definition of issues is no longer a locally-bounded process, but is subject to a certain degree of internationalisation, common awareness and similar understandings. The informative grounds for policies are dictated not only by political manifestos or ideological stance but also views that are shared by policy actors across the countries. It is necessary, therefore, to trace the sources of information and the means that define the starting points, justify the issues, and present them.

In this respect the role of international organizations is crucial (Freeman, 1985:81; Grubb, 1985:545). In the area of vocational training the existing literature is dominated by official reports, documents and other materials (cf. the bibliographies by European Centre) proving the scope of the work of such bodies in forging the current knowledge. The issuing of regular reports, (for instance, "Social report" by the EC), the setting up of information systems monitoring the development of policies (13) and the systematic

organisation of a great deal of exchange among policy-makers (conferences, seminars...) aim directly or indirectly at influencing national policies. There is an "informed opinion" that goes beyond national boundaries. The perspective commanding national and international reports is commonly an international one and national changes are viewed within this context.

This process of building up common "thinking" is the aim of all forms of "open learning" promoted by international organisations. Meeting, seminars, joint-reports, working parties are common practice and lead to a more homogenous perception of the situation and of its complexities. According to the OECD, working parties are set up in order to:

"...help countries exchange views about the way in which vocational education and training are evolving and might be guided by Governments..."
(1983:3)

This role sometimes becomes an explicit task; Mr Dejimbe, of the DGV (European Commission) specified the goal of the European Centre in these words:

"The Centre is an outstanding, the best, if I may say so, forum for regular discussions and exchanges among people responsible for vocational training at the various levels."
(Dejimbe, 1977:4) 1982:4)

How far this cognitive mobilization is influential is a matter for specific investigation. In general terms it appears of interest to policy analysts.

3.4.6 International Professional Constituencies

There is no active constituency. However, it is necessary to look at the intensity and frequency of exchange between policy-makers, experts, practitioners and

consultants in a consideration of the extent to which national policy processes are affected by international dimensions. For most national actors involved there are significant international links.

Interest groups, as was noted above, are relevant in the making of national policies. But they do not just deal with national or regional governments. Very often they are members of umbrella organisations (Kirchner and Schwaigen, 1981) at the European level, with access to international bodies.

Links between experts tend to be even stronger. There are "invisible colleges" crossing national boundaries with periodic gatherings (meetings, research teams). There are sectors in national bodies which deal with international institutions and national experts working as consultants with international organisations.(14) The links are institutionalised even from an administrative point of view. Employment Departments or training bodies have overseas sections concerned specifically with international relations.

3.4.7 Convergence of Policy Styles (15) and Implications for National Policies

The process of influence may take place in an indirect way. There are changes at the general level that impinge on individual country's policies. Policy-making is complicated and does not easily fit into a typology. Common trends may well produce similar approaches.

In particular some common reactions or attitudes have been identified as part of an undercurrent European policy model (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:169; Richardson, 1982; Bulmer, 1983:352; Freeman, 1975). These include a reactive and non-anticipatory stance in facing

problems, the sectoralisation and segmentation of policies, and a consensual approach to policy-making. Freeman refers to the "development of a professionally dominated, technocratic policy process in advanced societies" (1985:480) as a factor which leads to similarity of styles among countries.

If there is a growing similarity in handling problems, it is likely to be a common strategy. At the national level this could lead to a release of the structural constraints and the links with traditional approaches and patterns. An example is provided by manpower policies which created in different countries a nest for actual measures and an institutional framework for action which does not work along traditional lines.

Moreover, while coping with an urgent problem, the Government often deals with it politically and not on its economic and technical bases (Richardson and Henning, 1984). In addition the Government may be forced to operate within a range of alternatives limited (Freeman, 1985:480). Moreover, convergence across countries may occur within sectors and is not incompatible with differentiation within a country across policy sectors (Freeman, 1985:486).

3.4.8 Conclusion

When assembled, then, the isolated aspects of international and European influences depict a complex policy arena in a dynamic search for equilibrium. Various factors may facilitate this equilibrium or prevent it. These include the role of transnational and international actors as well as forces such as communication and culture (Gourevitch, 1978). The factors we have discussed above do not necessarily play the role of convergent

pressures for convergent changes. Outcomes are various and difficult to forecast. European and international influences may help the national system to adjust to change, to take unprecedented decisions or to reinforce the continuity of existing patterns.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In this Chapter we have explored the way in which policy decisions taken at the national level may be influenced by the existence of decision-making processes in other countries. Political scientists have pointed out that the dichotomy between national and international factors may be misleading. These factors must be considered as an entirety in terms of their interaction and interconnectedness (Bush and Puchala, 1976; Gourevitch, 1978) and as they shape a structure of influence. This Chapter has shown the difficulties in dealing with the question of policy influence. A lack of data, in particular, compounds these difficulties. However, these difficulties have not prevented a preliminary view of processes of contact and interaction. These occur and are likely to occur even in a particular area such as vocational training.

The two approaches (Sect.3.2) based respectively upon the "national uniqueness" perspective and "convergence" theory suffer from some radical shortcomings. They do not account for international factors relevant to domestic policy-making, nor for national factors that help an understanding of supranational developments, nor for policy processes at the supranational level. Not all, then, is explained by the two approaches. In addition national barriers are broken not only by convergent

change, but also when international exchange leads to a consolidation of traditional patterns.

Cross-national studies and comparative surveys, could benefit from concentrating more on such international factors. (Collier and Messick, 1975:1314).

As far as the EC literature is concerned, the current concepts of integration, assimilation, and approximation have variously expressed the European policy, but they are teleological and inadequate.(16) They either exaggerate one type of change (convergence) in a isolated way or they conceive of the interaction in term of close integration or interdependence. Policy-making processes do not necessarily follow the logic of integration. It is, therefore, important to explore the way in which the process of integration cope with divergent systems (Pinder, 1979).

The interaction may be explored by using the concepts of influence structure (17), "penetration"(18) (Bulmer, 1982:13) and issue networks (Laffan, 1983). Alternatively the notion of policy exchange (widely used in several areas; see, as an example, Cella, 1979) could provide a more appropriate conceptual basis for the purpose of this investigation.

By influence structure we mean that there are many links in the chain of causation. As it is not possible to analyse all such links, the aim here has been to sketch the network of potential causes (Dahl, 1976:25).(19) The intention of this research is not to move from the "anarchy" model of sovereign units to a model of influence structure.

From the point of view of empirical research there are obviously many different contact situations in which

these processes of influence take place, different forms in which they become evident and various outcomes.

One situation which will be explored in detail is that of "national parallel action" (20) - This is where several factors lead various governments and related policy machineries to define and implement similar policies. Such policies are similar in aim and content but do not converge because of different settings and basic assumptions governing that policy area. The notion of parallelism provides a less a priori view of changes and seems appropriate for some such cases. It summarises one possible avenue of changes deriving from the influence structure and contact. It also moves the boundaries of the policy system, conventionally nation-based, to a broader geographical and political context. Chapter Four presents the concept of parallel national action and identifies an example for such an analysis.

NOTES

(1) Bulmer has developed a perspective-domestic politics approach-based on the links between domestic politics and EC policy-making. He explains: "One of the objectives of the domestic politics approach is to establish why a member state sees the EC as the most appropriate level of action on some issues, whilst on other issues, the nation state or other international organisations are seen as most appropriate". (1983:357).

(2) See, as an example, Bureau International du Travail, 1979 and European Centre, 1979b.

(3) The term "convergence" is also used in policy studies as well. See "convergence of policy styles"...in Richardson, 1982. See also for critical discussion of the concept of 'policy style' Freeman, 1985:472-481.

(4) See for a critical appraisal of the convergence theory Maurice, 1977; Sorge, 1979.

(5) There are a number of crucial problems and limitations to the comparative studies. One of this is the "Galton problem". It concerns the assumption of isolation (crucial for any comparative analysis) in the case of contemporary societies. See the problem of case independence in Elder, 1976: 217; Webber, 1979:42.

(6) See Dahl, 1976:40-1.

(7) Many studies have been orientated by the "Community method" perspective and the "spill over" theory. The "Community method" is a "progress towards political unity by integrating one sector at a time, as this could be made acceptable to the Statesmen of the countries concerned" (Coombes, 1970:31). The "spill over" theory (Haas, 1958) argues that "the process of integration could be expected to pass from one sector of society to another in a more or less automatic fashion" (Coombes, 1970:31).

(8) A more complete presentation of EC involvement in training is to be found in Chapter Eight. These two sections (4.3. and 4.4.) illustrate the supranational policy area.

(9) See Hopkings, 1981 (general information about policy formation in the European Communities); Groenig, 1982.

(10) The notion of harmonisation is considered "ambiguë, obscure" by Lyon-Caen (1968:147).

(11) There are several processes of policy making and they have to be analysed independently (Rosenthal, 1975:135); the process of harmonisation tends to present different features according to sectors: social policy (Holloway, 1981), fiscal policy (Puchala, 1977); legal systems (Dashwood, 1977).

(12) According to Coates and Wallace "there is no satisfactory way of evaluating a Community component as distinct from the national component since the former is dependent on the latter". (1984:177)

(13) Cf European Centre Continuing Education and Training; Mutual Information System on Employment Policies (MISEP).

(14) "National experts" are often called in (Bush and Puchala, 1976:240; Averyt, 1975:960).

(15) Richardson, Gustafsson and Jordan define "policy style" as "the interaction between (a) the government's approach to policy-making and (b) the relationship between government and other actors in the policy process" (Richardson et al., 1982:13). See also: Richardson and Jordan, 1979; Richardson, 1982; Bulmer, 1983:352.

(16) Bush and Puchala (1976:233) pose the same question in relation to the EC: "Why should we conclude that the faltering pace of movement towards unification makes the European Community uninteresting...?" (1976:233).

(17) Influence structure is defined by Bush and Puchala as: "a subsystem of mutually supportive roles that functions in such a way that the effective, efficient (and individually rewarding) performance of every role depends upon the complementary performance of every other role" (1976:242).

(18) Bulmer uses the concept of penetration (as differentiated from integration and interdependence) in order to analyse: "the links between West Germany political system and policy-making at the Community level" (1982:13).

(19) See for the "influence terms" Dahl, 1976, 25; 37-39.

(20) See the concept referred to in Leichter, 1983:232. Nielsson, 1978; Pinder (1975:395) talks of a parallel instrument in relation to the operation of EC institutions; Laffan (1983:407) considers the European Social Fund as a parallel instrument.

CHAPTER FOUR

NATIONAL PARALLEL ACTIONS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The interplay between internal forces and outside influences affects the way in which national policy developments relate to each other. As we have seen in Chapter Three, many scholars have explored how domestic policy-making is affected by European and international influences. Others have looked into the reasons behind policy differences without reaching a satisfactory scheme for analysing policy variation (Lockhart, 1984). However, in relation to training, views are apparently polarised: some studies (See Chapter Two) emphasise the persistence of national boundaries, others focus on common trends - variously termed as diffusion, harmonisation, and integration.

In this chapter we shall steer a course between Scylla ("national particularism") and Charybdis ("common trends among countries") and shall try to develop an intermediate paradigm based on a balanced view of both elements, national uniqueness and common trends.(1)

It is argued here that some policy changes can be understood in term of parallel actions taken by individual countries operating within some kind of international framework. At the national level they do not fall into the conventional policy avenues as they bring about profound modifications; on the other hand these changes do not lead to convergent trends among countries.

The idea of parallelism is a mathematical one. It implies a continuous equidistance between two lines. Although not widely elaborated in policy analysis, the concept of parallel action is not absent in the

literature. Heidenheimer, Heclo and Adams recognised that:

"Convergence or divergence implies an image of two lines either coming together or moving apart. In fact developments may also be parallel, with countries moving in roughly the same direction but in their own distinctive ways. In general it seems that most of the policy areas discussed demonstrate important parallelism". (Heidenheimer, 1983:257)

Pinder (1975) talks of parallel instruments (funds, taxes, laws and regulations) in relation to the operation of EC institutions and sees this parallelism as a way of reaching co-ordination without requiring convergence of performance among member states. Nielsson (1978) terms the diffusion of common policies in the Scandinavian countries "parallel national actions". Laffan (1983:407) considers the European Social Fund as an instrument parallel to national actions.

As far as training policies are concerned one example among others (2) helps us to establish the need for such an intermediate concept. It is widely recognised that the increasing utilisation of micro-electronics has direct implications for training. Hence the concern of policy actors in this area and the growth of related initiatives in all western countries. Dealing with this "vocational adaptation to micro-electronics" in the EC countries, Sorge notes that:

"with increasing diffusion into different sectors, micro-electronics leads to increasingly variegated and differentiated training arrangements". (1981a:12)

and

"different countries adopt the new technologies in different ways, by integrating it into nationally specific courses, thus leaving the national specificity of the education and training system intact". (1981a:12)

This balance between what appears to be a widespread trend and the persistence of national specificity needs to be analysed from the policy-making point of view. Changes linked to micro-electronics primarily centre on training content; others (Neave, 1980) have more far-reaching implications for institutional and structural aspects.

This chapter includes four sections: first, a definition of parallelism in the context of comparative policy analysis; second, a sketch of five hypotheses concerning determinants of parallelism; third, an introduction to a case-study, that is training measures taken as a response to youth unemployment by EC member states in the 1970's; and finally, a research grid.

4.2 PARALLEL NATIONAL ACTIONS

4.2.1 Some crucial questions

The basic problem here is why Governments' responses to ongoing challenges such as air pollution, unemployment and technical change are divergent or similar; and how it is possible to frame the variability of such responses in a systematic way. These are current research issues in comparative policy analysis. They have been investigated particularly in those studies which examine the development of welfare state in a cross-national perspective, in recent studies in cross-national comparative public policies and, on a more reduced scale, in labour market policy studies. It is useful, therefore, to build on these lines of investigation in order to identify relevant questions in the area of training. In

this connection, three positions may be isolated. The first is based on the role of pioneering countries in the development of policies. This role appears in many historical presentations of policies adopted in the long term in various countries, and, sometimes, causal links between pioneer and follower countries are stressed. Bendix, in his study about modernisation, presents this "pioneer model". He says:

"A basic element of modernisation is that it refers to a type of social change since the eighteenth century, which consists in the economic and political advance of some pioneering societies and the subsequent changes in the follower societies". (1967:61)

This appears to be the case, for instance, with unemployment insurance (Alber, 1981:153). The effect of diffusion patterns have been isolated by Collier and Messick who conclude their research by saying that internal socio-economic conditions (pre-requisites in their terminology) had little effect upon the initial adoption of social security legislation in Western Europe (1975). With more cautious conclusions Kuhnle (1981) discusses the diffusion perspective in analysing the growth of social insurance in Scandinavian countries.

The second position points out the link between dissimilar policy environments and alternative policies; it has been labelled political and institutional approach (Schmidt, 1984:37).(3) From this perspective Rimlinger (1971) has studied the relationship between industrialisation and the welfare state. In his investigation into the response to the challenge of insecurity in different countries, he identifies alternative paths followed by different countries according to their economic, political and social structure. In this context the role of institutional,

structural and political factors (Alber, 1981; Flora and Alber:1981) has been widely considered and emphasised. Alber, in particular, recalls the overwhelming role of the "historical determinants of national schemes" (1981:177).

The third position is held by those scholars who have identified commonalities among countries in the analysis of several policy issues. Blankenburg talks of a "mutual imitation process" that led countries (France, Britain, Sweden and West Germany) to major changes in their labour market administration (1978:XII). Casey points out commonalities of response to the economic crisis of 1974-1975 (1983). Rimlinger showed that similar social security programmes can be implemented within different economic systems (1971). The policy sector approach (Freeman, 1985) has shown that there are cross-national similarities in the way issues are dealt with beyond peculiar styles which individual nations may adopt.

These perspectives dominate studies of long-term processes such as the history of welfare states and involve those which have large-scale changes such as the development of the education in the industrialisation process and the establishment of public social services. Unfortunately they do not examine in depth the impact of international influences. Most such studies, even when they are comparative, are nation-based in their design even in comparative studies and descriptive and exploratory when dealing with cross-national interaction. Thus, they provide little direct help for the study of policy development and for that of the complex diffusion process described above.

However, studies with these three perspectives bring out some general questions that could be fruitfully taken

into account and adapted for the purpose of the present research. In particular:

1. Does a pioneering role by individual countries still exist? How does it appear in contemporary policy-making? How do political learning processes take place in contemporary policy formation?
2. How are common issues dealt with by Governments and other political actors operating in different political markets?
3. Are there "system needs" to be tackled by present Governments and political actors irrespective of the institutional and political framework, historical background and ideological stance?
4. To what extent are solutions, measures and programmes adaptable within different policy environments? Why do policy instruments tend to converge in non-homogeneous contexts?

It is not the scope of this research to answer all of these questions (4). However, this serves to guide this exploratory study in the direction of cross-national change that we have called "parallel national actions". This pattern may, at this stage, be identified only indirectly as something not to be assimilated either with convergence or with continuity of national particularism. In cross-national policy analysis it is a conceptual device for focusing on the similarity of national policies in areas where national particularism is dominant. At the same time the concept of parallelism can be used in order to consider some suggestions reported above (See Section 4.1). For example, in analysing the shift in the balance of power between traditional systems of education administration and the "para-educational" agencies, Neave (1980) asks how far parallel developments

are taking place in other parts of Europe. Freeman also clearly stresses the need for new perspectives. He states:

"It is time to abandon the equally unacceptable alternative suggested by those who argue that each national case is unique and unassimilable within any theoretical framework and those who imply an ineluctable trend towards cross-national convergence". (Freeman, 1985:469)

4.2.2 The definition of Parallel National Actions

By "Parallel National Actions" we mean "courses of action taken by a cluster of countries with dissimilar policy settings" and presenting the following features:

- a) simultaneity of action;
- b) within an international structure of influence and institutional framework;
- c) with elements of policy discontinuity at the national level;
- d) commonalities (aims, contents, instruments) in a cross-national perspective.

The basic characteristic about parallelism is the equidistance between national variations of action. Due to the strength of particularism and the variety of potential influences it may be assumed that in areas such as training this is a likely pattern of change. There are, of course, other potential patterns; parallelism is only one of the responses to particularism. (5)

4.3 DETERMINANTS OF PARALLELISM

This thesis is particularly concerned with the growing number of issues which arise almost at the same time in different countries and which have similar implications in terms of policy formation. The emergence and the processing of such issues at times include elements of parallelism. As a complex pattern of policy development in a set of countries parallelism is dependent on the interaction between several variables. However, at this point, an attempt will be made only to isolate some of the factors which are likely to facilitate the development of parallel actions.(6)

Hypothesis [1] Problem pressure

Problem pressure is a major policy-initiating factor. It consists of two elements: the objective problem pressure and the pressure generated by social and political mobilisation (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:77ff; Flora and Alber, 1981:43). The pressure deriving from problems common to several countries (Eyestone, 1977) appears likely to lead to governmental action. Economic recession (Cox, 1982) economic inequality (Rimlinger, 1971) and unemployment (Alber, 1981; Richardson and Henning, 1984; Gerlach, Peters and Sengenberger, 1984) provide classic examples of agenda-setting started by a common challenge.

Elements of urgency and novelty (7) are useful ingredients in promoting the search for non-traditional policies; they lessen the chance of using or adapting existing policy solutions and instruments.

Common problem pressure in various countries reflects the internationalisation of many issues in contemporary policy-making.(8) This pressure accounts mainly for issues entering the political agenda and does not

necessarily lead to convergent or parallel policies. The recession of the 1970's and the early 1980's and the diversity in economic response in OECD countries is testimony to this (Hodges and Wallace, 1981).

Hypothesis [2] Political Response

Parallel national actions are more likely to develop in different countries when there is a strong political response to a challenge. This response may be symbolic or substantive; political management of crises includes the management of the perceptions and expectations of the "problem". Richardson and Henning give an example of political management as opposed to economic and technical management:

"Once by whatever mechanism, unemployment has been accepted as an issue on the political agenda, then Governments have to devise ways of managing the issue either by the formulating and implementing of particular public policies or by skilfully managing the structuring of the debate about the cause of unemployment and about what might be achieved in policy terms". (1984:4)

The need for a political response on the part of Governments may lead to the adoption of a strategy. Scharpf defines strategic choice in these terms:

"It refers to a crucial understanding among those who exercise effective power, of a set of decision premises integrating world views, goals and means". (1984:72)

When facing an acute situation such as a rising level of youth unemployment Governments may feel forced to a sudden and active response. This political drive may bypass institutional arrangements and go through the whole range of factors such as power relationships and distributive struggles within civil society, modes of regulating the economy and class conflicts, and ideological determinants of political decision-making. In

this context the discretion margin open to Governments and policy actors may be wider.

Implications for training policies are far-reaching. One of the main differences among countries is the Government's stance (See Chapter Two:Sect.2.3). Training policies have frequently been characterised by non-decision, "laissez-faire" attitudes and active market forces. Any shift from non-decision to an interventionist attitude may place national Governments in an increasingly similar position to each other and may overcome different attitudes held by policy actors.

Hypothesis [3] European Influences

Involvement of international bodies (e.g. EC) may account for parallel national actions (9). The need for co-ordination of policies while retaining divergence in performance is at the origins of parallel operations (Pinder, 1975) by EC institutions and national Governments. Any situation in which joint consultation, policy-networking at the extra-national level, and political learning are involved will facilitate formation of parallel policies. In particular, as far as the EC is concerned, this hypothesis can be specified in two directions:

a) Open learning process. The EC, like other international bodies (Commonwealth, Nordic Council) provides a forum for political learning and policy dissemination; the European factor has become more and more a component of the national policy environment;

b) European initiatives parallel to national initiatives. The EC works in different ways according to different policy areas. For some areas there is no formal provision in the Treaty of Rome for direct legislation and national policies are not always convergent: in these cases the European institutions tend to act as "eleventh member" (Pinder, 1975) of the community. They develop a parallel or complementary action to those taken by member states i.e. without suppressing or replacing the instruments of member states.

There are, therefore, two levels of influence. They have implications in terms of a general interpretation of EC policy-making. The identification of the two directions mentioned above is based on the use of perspectives developed by several authors (Pinder, 1975; Coates and Wallace, 1984).

Hypothesis [4] Policy Discontinuity

Parallel national actions require some degree of discontinuity in national policies. However enduring national particularism has prevented similar moves among European training systems. Any factor weakening existing systems can free the search for alternative solutions.

There are many mechanisms which provoke partial or large-scale solutions in terms of the continuity or termination of policies; they concern both policy contents and policy-making process. Any restructuring of the policy machinery may induce policy changes. Criticism about the inadequacy of the organisation of training and discontent about its outcome pave the way for the adoption of new measures. The stronger particularism, the greater is the discontinuity necessary in order to reach similar decisions in different countries.

Hypothesis [5] Technical Transfer

Another condition that may help parallel development is the availability of transferable measures or programmes that can be integrated within or added to different existing arrangements. Owing to the variability of training arrangements transfer tends to be unlikely. However, an alternative view emerges from considering the way in which policies are delivered in contemporary societies (Mayntz, 1983; Rose, 1984). In the provision of social services (housing, education, health and manpower programmes) there is a general trend towards programmes

conceived as "strategy for purposive action within a framework where parts of many public and private organisations must co-operate" (Hjern and Porter, 1979:8). Once the provision of training is administered less by isolated administrative units and more by an array of parts of organisations, the national configuration of such an array is secondary to the actual programme rationale (Hanf and Scharf (eds), 1978; Hjern and Porter, 1979; Rainey and Milward, 1983:140ff). It is obviously easier to adopt or imitate specific programmes than to transfer basic arrangements for training from one country to another or to draw from lessons from abroad (Haveman and Saks, 1985). In a multi-organisation policy area such as training, the programme rationale may be considered as an underlying unifying factor among the actions taken by national Governments. (10)

Generally speaking, parallel national actions are facilitated by the knowledge of specific schemes and technical solutions.

It is argued here that these five hypotheses account for the conditions for parallel actions taken by national Governments. The methodological approach of this thesis, however, is not experimental; therefore these hypotheses are means of focusing attention upon several variables. Before applying here hypotheses to a specific case, the case itself will be outlined.

4.4 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN THE 1970's

4.4.1 Unemployment and its policy salience.

Unemployment (11) has always been an important focus of political and popular concern. This was so at the beginning of this century (Alber, 1981) and in the period between the two wars (Seabrook, 1981; Rees and Rees, 1982). Policy responses to the problem of rising unemployment have been studied by several authors (Cox, 1982; Richardson and Henning, 1984). Special initiatives, such as work programmes in the 1930's, and long-term developments such as the design of systems of insurance, have been analysed as a response to unemployment.

In the 1970's unemployment was again one of the major policy issues in most western countries. Youth unemployment exceeded adult unemployment and became a source of wide political concern (Richardson and Henning, 1984:6; Gerlach, Peters and Sengenberger, 1984). The political need to react to juvenile unemployment led Governments to take actions in several directions. Among the initiatives taken, some special measures, known as "Youth programmes", were designed and implemented (OECD, 1978a; 1978b; 1980a; 1981).(12)

There has been a rich variety of such measures from attempts to influence the supply of labour to efforts to influence the demand for labour (Richardson and Henning, 1984:9; Reubens 1983; European Centre, 1977b; 1978; 1981a). Some of measures can be termed as "Youth training programmes" (13): these include a variety of 'solutions' aiming, according to the official rationale, at improving skills and the quality of the supply of youth labour (14) while, at the same time, have a relevant impact on the structure of the youth labour market. Work Experience Programme, the Youth Opportunities Programme and the Youth Training Scheme in the United Kingdom, the "contrat

formation-emploi" and the "contratti formazione e lavoro" in Italy fall into this category.

In the current research it is hypothesised that the youth training programmes (YTPs) constituted a case of parallel means used by European Governments in their responses to youth unemployment. Basic differences in national training organisations and institutional and political backgrounds account for their variability from one country to another.

In this context EC institutions provided a forum for policy formation and exchange and also acted as an extra-national actor working alongside national policy machineries.

Support for this argument is provided by comparative studies. Some authors have pointed out the special attention given to young people (Butt, Philip and Whitehouse, 1984:278); others have noted common aspects of the youth as a target group (Reubens, 1976:285). The similarity of policy responses has been taken into consideration (OECD, 1978b) and analysed within a common framework (European Centre, 1978; 1981a). Common developments in Europe have been envisaged by Neave (1980) in the provision for the 16-19 age group; similar approaches in the development of the policy perspective of the 'youth guarantee' have been illustrated by Jackson (1985). The concern of educators about the transition from school to work has been viewed as a manifestation of vocationalism spread across the countries (Grubb, 1985:537). Casey and Bruche (1985) point out, in a comparative exercise, that particular categories of jobseekers, particularly young people, have come to dominate traditional labour market programmes and that:

"The actual programs adopted in Europe share similar goals and content. All attempted to remedy supposed deficits in schooling and

provide some sort of work experience or training for young persons". (1985:48)

The same authors suggest that British YTS and French Employment and Training Contracts may be seen as:

"steps to establish labour market institutions that might perform the same functions as the successful German 'dual system'." (1985:48)

Discussing the transition issue in Western Europe, Johnson recognises that 'sharing experiences' is one of the factors "causing the current diversity within Western countries to diminish" (1987:30). At a more general level Reubens has analysed policy initiatives dealing with transition problems in western countries. She maintains that:

"The most advanced European countries are not notable for discussing or implementing ideas that are unknown in the United States. On the contrary, they have paid particular attention to American experience and programs because we have had more time in which to confront the difficulties that they have recognised only in the past years. It is fairly easy for the informed visitor to these countries to identify programs whose inspiration comes from across the Atlantic or that are similar to ours although independently derived". (1976:289)

Richardson and Henning note that Europe and the United States are not all that dissimilar:

"The absence of a comprehensive system for serving the employment and training needs of its citizens, including the disadvantaged, unemployed or underemployed, in the USA is matched by a similar ad hoc 'groping' style of response in Western Europe". (1984:308-9)

In addition the long-term developments of YTP in several countries have shown a common shift of emphasis from an emergency plan to universal measures. A recent OECD report recognises that special youth programmes have led to a major political commitment to providing

extensive opportunities for vocational education and training (OECD, 1983:10).

In an international survey on "Youth at work" Reubens identifies a similar process in various other countries. She notes that emergency programmes were subsequently converted and institutionalised :

"into permanent methods of serving not only unemployed youth but youth who potentially might be exposed to unemployment after leaving school". (1983:XII).

However, the way in which the policy responses were built up in each national context, how training measures were designed and implemented in different national settings, and their long-term impact on national particularistic training patterns has been unexplored.

Although the above questions could be explored in relation to all western countries, the analysis is limited to three European countries: France, Italy and United Kingdom. The rationale for this is presented in Chapter One (Sect.1.6). In addition more importance has been given to special programmes concerned with training, in these countries (15). Youth schemes also exist in Japan and Federal Republic of Germany, but there, the youth unemployment issue has been tackled more in the context of a general policy such as, in the latter, by efforts to manoeuvre the demand and supply of apprentices. Sweden, Canada and the United States provide useful references as well. By choosing countries belonging to the EC it becomes easier to focus on processes of international influence. (16)

4.4.2 Youth unemployment and training programmes in France, Italy and the United Kingdom

In an attempt to study policy formation in this area, it is necessary first to identify the background to the

Youth Training Programmes. This involves a brief summary of the unemployment situation in the three countries under consideration. Table 4.1 shows the growth of unemployment figures during the 1970's.

Table 4.1 Youth Unemployment Rate (a) 1960-1979

	FRG	France	Italy	U.K.
1960	0.7b	4.2c	3.1	--
1970	0.4	5.6	9.7	2.9
1973	1.0	6.3	11.9	2.8
1976	5.2	10.1	13.9	12.5
1977	5.4	11.1	22.9	14.3
1978	4.8	11.0	23.9	13.5
1979	3.8	13.3	24.6	11.9

(a) Defined as unemployed aged 15-24 as a percent of total labour force aged 15-24. (b) Rate for 1958. (c) Rate for 1962.

Source: OECD, Economic Outlook, Vol.27 July 1980, p.23.

By the beginning 1979, the figures had risen steadily to more than double those of early 1970's. The proportions of those unemployed in the age groups 14 -19 and 20-24 unemployed in France, Italy and United Kingdom, have been constantly well above average figures irrespective of whether the country's unemployment rate is relatively low or high.

Table 4.2 Youth and Adult Unemployment 1960-1979. Ratio of Youth to Adult Unemployment Rates.

	FRG	France	Italy	U.K.
1960	0,5a	2.5b	1.1	--
1970	1.0	2.2	6.5	1.5
1973	1.3	2.3	7.4	1.4
1976	1.7	3.2	8.7	3.4
1977	1.8	3.3	6.5	3.6
1978	1.7	3.1	7.0	3.5
1979	1.4	3.3	6.6	3.3

(a) Data for 1958. (b) data for 1962.

Source: OECD, Economic Outlook, Vol.27, July 1980, p.23.

The major steps in the development of training measures as a response to youth unemployment have varied from one country to another. The pace of change, its scope, its general impact also differed. It is possible to identify a common three-phase process: the first centred on the political debate and the emergence of the issue, the second (1976-1978) included 'emergency plans' and the third sought the consolidation of youth schemes in more permanent and potentially universal forms. (17)

In France (18) youngsters have traditionally enjoyed a relatively high level of education and training. The risk and the problem of youth unemployment was not recognised until the mid-1970's. In January 1975 a special programme ("Operation 50,000 jeunes") was launched. Subsequently the "Pactes Nationaux de l'emploi" were signed in 1977, 1978 and 1979. These programmes included employment and training contracts based on alternating training. In the early 1980's an extensive new programme ("Plan Avenir Jeunes") for the young was defined and instituted (Schwartz, 1982).

In Italy (19) the approach to vocational training has traditionally left the problem of youth training unsolved (La Malfa and Serravalle, 1976; Pescarollo, 1979). The situation of the youth has long been characterised by two aspects. The proportion of youth who are neither at school or in the labour market has been high (28.4% in 1975; see De Francesco, 1978:1) and unemployment has been worse among secondary school graduates than among the less educated. Major policy measures were debated and taken during the two years 1976-1977: they were included in the Law n.285 titled "Provvedimenti per l'occupazione giovanile" (measures for youth employment) which came into force on June 1977. Irrespective of the alleged failure of the 1977 legislative action (Arrigo, 1982), employment and training contracts were successfully resumed later in the 1980's in different forms.

In the United Kingdom (20) after a trial period (1974-1977) of early schemes (WOC in 1974; WE in 1976), a major effort was implemented with Youth Opportunities Programme (160,000 youngsters involved in 1978-1979 and 440,000 in 1981-1982). The more recent Youth Training Scheme may well appear as the development of previous programmes. Generally speaking the youth programmes have been the backbone of a long-term change in the provision of training for young people.

EC institutions (21) have been involved in a variety of ways. Unemployment has been on the agenda of the Council of Ministers meetings and of special Tripartite Conferences. The use of the European Social Fund resources for unemployment, particularly youth unemployment (Evans, 1981:245ff; Collins, 1983:39ff; Vandamme, 1984; Coates and Wallace, 1984) became possible in 1975. The recommendations issued on vocational preparation and "alternance" (1977-1978) and the launch of a special project on transition (1976-1981) were the

major avenues of action. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training has been involved in this area since its inception (1974)(22).

We have, therefore, in this period, national courses of action intended to tackle youth unemployment. Direct actions by Governments were designed and implemented irrespective of national differences. A large consensus was growing about the need to provide each young person with a fair chance to be trained before entering work or in the transition phase from school to work. This awareness was voiced at both national and international levels. Schwartz in his report to the French Government about the integration of young people in society and working life defines as a political aim:

"Ensuring that all young people from 16 to 18 can obtain a vocational and social qualification". (1982:21)

In the mid 1970's, in Scandinavian countries, there appeared on the political agenda a "youth guarantee in terms of a commitment to provide all young people an opportunity for employment, work experience or training/education". (Secretariat of the Nordic Council of Ministers, 1981; Jackson, 1985). The Communiqué of the December 1977 High-Level Conference on Youth Unemployment (OECD, 1978a) refers to the views of some countries that "a social guarantee of education, training and work for all youth constitutes an objective to be achieved in order to ensure their meaningful integration into working life". (OECD, 1978a:91) In the European parlance "social guarantee" was the new term coined in the early 1980's. An official document summarises its meaning in this way:

"The general aim of the social guarantee should be to provide all young people with the opportunity to pass through a stage of transition, between the end of full-time compulsory schooling and entry into the labour

market, during which time they should be able to choose how to develop their social and vocational skills and prepare themselves for adult working life. The immediate aim of the social guarantee should be to ensure that all young people having full-time compulsory education should be presented with some alternative to unemployment. As a general principle all young people should be entitled to at least two years' further education, training or work experience after leaving full time compulsory schooling". (Com (82)637 final 21.10.82)

These elements justify, in our view, the case study. The youth schemes provide a field for an attempt to explore and verify the value of parallel national actions as a concept.

4.5 A RESEARCH GRID

This section aims to develop the five hypotheses listed in Section Two of this Chapter. Bearing in mind the peculiarity of the case being considered here (23), the conditions facilitating the emergence of parallel actions can be reformulated. The five hypotheses identify dynamics at work within this particular policy area that are common to several countries and which push them in the same direction.

(1) Problem pressure: a need for action

From 1975-1978 a similar functional need was widely perceived by political actors in France, Italy and United Kingdom and at the European level. There was no room for a "doing nothing" option in the face of growing unemployment, particularly of youth unemployment. An urgent, visible and direct response was seen as necessary.

At the same time the youth unemployment issue became enmeshed with the training issue. Cautiously but continually the lack of training was referred to as a cause of employment difficulties for youngsters; and as a consequence training measures were universally considered appropriate. They were not viewed as radical solutions to the problem, but as politically satisfactory means. This became an unquestioned assumption.

It seems that two factors are likely to be relevant in the development of parallel actions in the area of training:

a. the need for a direct response to youth unemployment. In the context of crisis management policies, long-term solutions or macro-economic strategy appeared to be insufficient, at least not adequate for coping with the political risks of youth unemployment (24).

b. the definition of the situation of youth unemployment in terms of lack of training. This was not the only component; however it was present in all the three countries and remained a constant and controversial element in the problem identification process.

Political factors that led to (a) and (b) varied from one country to another. They depended on national circumstances. The ideological and cultural processes that contributed to the definition of the situation were rooted in national cultural and political backgrounds. With various voices in the three countries the belief (25) that lack of adequate training was to be blamed for youth unemployment, was spelted out. And training appeared as a valuable response.

(2) Political response: interventionist policies.

By considering the response to the sudden challenge of youth unemployment, the salience of YTP in the

Governments' crisis management policy and the structure of interest involved may be identified as relevant factors. The context was that of an interventionist attitude; this was a major unifying factor among national Governments.

The YTP became an integral part of the attempt by Governments to deal with the political risks of youth unemployment. However varied were the proclaimed and implicit aims of the schemes, the main concern was political. In a sense training was a second-order issue, but it became more and more important with the increasing relevance of the unemployment issue both in symbolic and substantive terms (Casey, 1983:109).(26)

The design and the implementation of YTP had several repercussions on patterns of intermediation between Government and non-governmental interests (trade unions, employers and educationist). A policy community emerged, urging and backing Governments' initiatives.

In addition, education and training lobbies became influential; they called for more training provision for young people and began to consider the special programmes as a starting point for the desired reform of training and for a new comprehensive programme for all the young people.

These four factors - an interventionist governmental stance, the indirect political salience of special programmes, the structuring of a policy community and the appearance of education and training lobbies - do not account for all the processes of decision-making at the national level. However, they hint at four potential sources of parallel ways of dealing with the youth unemployment issue in different policy systems. The aim is not to investigate the structural and administrative

differences between Italy, France and the United Kingdom in terms of how they dealt with various issues.

(3) European influence: the ESF as a parallel instrument and processes of political learning.

European influence facilitated the development of parallel actions primarily because of the way in which international co-operation is organised in the area of training and the failure by international organisations, such as the EC, to take major common action against unemployment.

In particular the following factors were relevant to this process: a) the lack of strong and specific provision by the Treaty of Rome for training which prevented a more incisive action as in other areas (agriculture, trade barriers); b) although unemployment was on the policy agenda of EC, no major initiatives were taken at the level of Council of Ministers. (See Chapter Eight:Sect.8.3) The pressure from some countries for a European solution had no direct effect.(27)

As a consequence only the existing instrument, i.e. the ESF (Coates and Wallace, 1984:169-172), could be mobilised and oriented to the problem of youth unemployment. This led to the relevance of a European dimension in domestic politics being mainly linked to the use of ESF funds and the pronouncements by the European Commission (recommendations).

The resultant pressure and expectations led to the diversification of the role of EC institutions in the training area. Instead of promoters of 'common vocational training policies', (the overstated priority of EC policy), these institutions became the facilitators of processes of political learning. This allowed them to become more involved in exchange and this situation left

space for the development of a more appropriate function: exchange and cross-fertilisation which fostered a "good deal of sharing of experiences across Europe". (Johnson, 1987:39)

- (4) Policy discontinuity: the inadequacy of current policy instrument and a new policy setting for training matters.

In a field where national particularism is dominant, parallel actions imply a certain degree of discontinuity in the policy pursued at the national level. The existing organisation of training was not regarded as adequate to the challenge of youth unemployment in any of the three countries. Trial and error, learning by doing, were inescapable strategies in policy-making. In particular, three factors of discontinuity may be identified:

- a) Youth unemployment emerged as a new problem calling for a new or unusual solution. It was not only a question of reviving something already existing (e.g. apprenticeship) although this was one of the attempted avenues;
- b) the mobilisation of policy actors gave rise to a different array of organisations and interests dealing with training matters;
- c) a further element that increased the gap between YTP and existing training arrangements was the fact that YTPs were gradually conceived as something universal or potentially universal, alternative to the existing organisation.

In the long-term these elements of discontinuity became less marked as the various youth schemes were accommodated in the current systems or compromises were found.

- (5) Know-how and expertise: information dissemination and programme-centred delivery systems.

In the mid-1970's Governments and non-governmental bodies (the so-called unemployment policy community) faced a

dramatic situation: a pressing imperative to take action and little or no expertise in appropriate measures to be taken.

There were no available models to be imported and copied. The question may be considered from two points of view: the content of actions to be taken and the way of taking action. In this context two sets of factors are stressed. The first concerns the growing international awareness among policy actors. Investigation of foreign experience, utilisation of comparative material in discussing alternative solutions, reference to foreign examples, cross-national evaluation studies all became integral parts of the policy-making process. There was a conspicuous development of information. The second concerns the trend towards the launch of programmes. Initiatives were designed in terms of programmes rather than in terms of general policy options. A programme is a pattern of action that can be used in different administrative and political settings (28).

Both these factors diminished the strength of national particularism and made it feasible to attempt new solutions and innovative measures. The five hypotheses presented above form the base of a grid for data collection. (29)

4.6 CONCLUSION

This chapter has described the theoretical assumptions (30) and perspectives behind an attempt to identify pattern of parallelism through an empirical study. The aim has been to identify some characteristics of the policy process in relation to youth training. Instead of

aiming at isolating unique national policy procedures, we have tried to outline a framework for policy routine common to more than one country. It is argued here that there are similar operating procedure for handling issues which arrive on the political agenda; these procedures affect both the process of decision-making and the policy content itself. (31)

The following four chapters will analyse three national cases (France, Italy and the United Kingdom) and the EC policy initiatives. The national studies will concentrate on vocational preparation and youth schemes in the United Kingdom (Chapter Five), "Provvedimenti per l'occupazione giovanile" and "contratti di formazione e lavoro" in Italy (Chapter Six) and "Contrat formation-emploi" and "Pactes national de l'emploi" in France (Chapter Seven). European influences will be dealt with in Chapter Eight.

The analysis will focus primarily on the first stage of these developments (1975-1980). More recent developments will also be taken into consideration (32).

National cases will not, strictly speaking verify the hypotheses (Section Five); they serve to illustrate the hypotheses by providing empirical evidence and therefore help to understand the policies and actions taken by European Governments. In final Chapter Nine the value of parallel national actions as a concept will be discussed.

NOTES

(1) We think that one important aspect in designing a comparative exercise relates to the level of categorisation. As Elder points out: "It is possible to counter the argument for national uniqueness and cross-national dissimilarity with the argument that if one uses a sufficiently general level of categorisation, most unique phenomena can be fitted into categories of non unique phenomena and can be dealt with accordingly". (1976:216). However, there are, in our view, other aspects to be considered from a more substantive point of view. There are levels of dissimilarity and interaction to be taken into account.

(2) There are other areas with similar actions taken by national Governments; e.g. the creation of new activities (European Centre, 1980b), training for women and training and education initiatives in favour of migrant people.

(3) A political-institutional approach, says Schmidt, "focuses on how, and to what degree, decisions on the part of economic agents and their macro-outcomes are shaped by political norms, political institutions, distributions of power between social classes or between political tendencies and activities on the part of government or other important actors on the political market" (1984:37). This approach has been used in connection with the political analysis of inflation and unemployment. For a view of public social programmes adopted in response to social changes and problems associated with industrialisation see Wilensky (1975) and a critique of this view in Lockhart (1984:338-9).

(4) These questions have theoretical bearings; they relate to a general theory of society as a whole. In this context (see Chapter One) they are used as guidelines for the current empirical investigation.

(5) The amount of existing differences and their deep roots prevent more convergent changes (See Chapter Two).

(6) There are two kinds of limits to the approach in this thesis: the first is general, the second specific. First, the isolation of variables is difficult and most factors are meaningful only when considered in their context.

Almond and Verba discuss the dilemma between meaningless isolated variables and the impossible comparison of contexts and conclude: "Is there any way out of the dilemma? The answer is no if we are looking for a perfect solution but 'yes' if we are looking for a reasonable solution" (1970:364). Second, the choice of the hypotheses is a-theoretical: it does not stem from an explicit theoretical framework. Instead it aims at building up a set of preliminary generalisations.

(7) See Leichter, 1983:230).

(8) In the case of training policies it seems that many policy issues had a low level of internationalisation; see for example the regionalisation of training administration in Italy.

(9) From the policy process point of view, problem identification is a crucial factor in policy development (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:85).

(10) This does not contradict the fact that the plurality of decision - points and "clearances" make the policy process difficult and tortuous (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:137ff).

(11) There is a debate about the use of the concept of unemployment. In the context of this piece of research the concept of "unused labour reserve" includes the number of registered unemployed, the number of registered job seekers and the number of non-registered unemployed people.

(12) Most of this research focuses on the Western European experience. For the USA case, see Sawhill and Anderson, 1980; Levin and Ferman, 1985; National Academy of Science, 1985.

(13) We agree with Casey (1983:5) when he says that in some cases "the decision as to whether they should be regarded as essentially training or essentially job creation measures is likely to be a rather arbitrary one".

(14) For the place of promotion of training in a typology of active public policies towards full employment see Gerlach, Peters and Sengenberger (1984:15).

(15) In his cross-national analysis of labour market performance in OECD nations (1974-1981) Schmidt (1984:41) places France, Italy and the United Kingdom among the nations with "mass unemployment" while Sweden along with Japan is placed in the group of countries with "Real Full Employment". The author qualifies further the groups from a political point of view (modes of regulating the economy, class conflicts, welfare state and ideology).

(16) Another example of the adoption of parallel measures is the introduction of employment subsidies in the EC countries (Butt and Whitehouse, 1984).

(17) In the early 1980's, as we shall see in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the consolidation of the temporary measure was a major policy issue. In his letter to B.Schwartz the French Prime Minister P.Mauroy clearly notes the existing "juxtaposition of arrangements" and the need for a "coordination of school, vocational training and the employment of young people" (Schwartz, 1982:II).

(18) Meriaux, 1984.

(19) Bruno, 1978; Frey, 1976.

(20) MacLure, 1979; Rees and Atkinson, 1982.

(21) See European Centre, 1981a

(22) European Centre, 1977b, 1978, 1981a

(23) Most of the literature is descriptive and does not provide useful insights; for an exception see De Maupeou-Abboud, 1980.

(24) The peculiarity of the situation and its repercussions have been noticed. In his cross-national survey Casey writes that: "...recognition that unemployment has reached 'unacceptable' levels can be sufficient to induce administrations for whom such interventionist policies are ideologically anathema (e.g. USA) to accept even to initiate active labour market programmes, because they have to be seen to be 'doing something'". (1983)

(25) It is worth noticing that it was more a belief that the result of rigorous problem identification. Most of the time youth schemes were conceived as general measures to increase skill levels in the population as a whole "improving the stock of human capital". (Richardson and Henning, 1984:12).

(26) Richardson and Henning link the "high political salience of the issue" to the "increasingly interventionist measures in search for effective policy response"; and that "irrespective of ideology" (1984:12).

(27) Cf. The diversity in economic policy and macroeconomic performance among European countries (Hodges and Wallace, 1981).

(28) Many authors, especially in USA, have developed public policy analyses based on "programme networks" as the most important type of network for policy-making and exploring its implications in term of policy-making and implementation (Scharpf, 1978; Hjern and Porter, 1981). For an example of a study of training programmes in West Germany and Sweden, see Hanf, Hjern and Porter, 1978).

(29) See Appendixes One, Two and Three, for research methods.

(30) Scharpf notes that the theoretical underdevelopment in the field of cross-national studies is linked to the fact that "many researchers are hesitant to move beyond the aspiration level of historical case studies" and so the prevalence of the case study method in the field of policy studies (1978:345).

(31) Cf. The attempt by Richardson (1982) to identify common standard procedures among countries. He discusses the question of whether policy styles are convergent or divergent and isolates some common trends in policy styles.

(32) This Chapter has provided a base for a fieldwork; at the same time we have benefitted of the fielwork in revising it and in formulating the hypotheses concerning the determinants of parallelism.

PART TWO

DEVELOPMENTS IN YOUTH TRAINING IN THE 1970's

CHAPTER FIVE

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It seems that policy-making has been characterized more by policy inertia than by policy dynamics. Several authors have pointed out that the British policy style is not readily compatible with sharp turns in policies. Immobilistic attitudes are the likely outcome of Government's overloading (King, 1975:294) and the reactive approach to problem-solving (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:23). Corporatist and consensual dominant values (Richardson and Jordan, 1979: 45; Ashford, 1981: 23; Jordan and Richardson, 1982) and the "humdrum" system of policy-making (Hayward, 1974:398-9) may prevent the swift adoption of innovative policies. Moreover, in economy-related fields action by ideological pressure groups has rarely been relevant while "economic groups...have exercised considerable influence on government" (Marsh, 1983:15).

In line with these views industrial training has been depicted as a basically stable policy sector (Stringer and Richardson, 1982), characterised by a "'closed system' in which outsiders rarely intrude" (Anderson and Fairley, 1983), undermined by institutional rivalries and central-local conflicts, and entrapped in the rather rigid cage of the traditional pattern of vocational training.(1)

By way of contrast, recent changes that have taken place in this policy area have been considered "politically controversial" (Anderson and Fairley, 1983:1) and "radical" (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:36). The New Training Initiative launched in the early 1980's has been viewed as "a major reform of the training

system" (Fairley, 1982) and a "watershed in training policy" (Ryan, 1984:1).

This chapter is about the youth training schemes (2) designed and adopted in the 1970's as measures to counteract youth unemployment. (3) These schemes (WEP, UVP and YOP) turned out to be relevant steps in the emergence in the 1980's of a comprehensive programme of training (formal training and work experience) for minimum-age school leavers (YTS). This latest development led to a new policy for the initial training of young people based on the "universal training for young school leavers" (Ryan, 1984). (4) This process has been seen as the construction of "a new deal for Britain's youth" (Finn, 1982a) after the RoLSA (Raising of School Leaving Age) in the history of British education. Stafford (1981:56) has studied one of the youth schemes, the Youth Opportunities Programme, and has considered it as a variant in the conflict relationship between youth and the capitalistic State.

Our analysis focuses on three overlapping and interwoven processes. First, it discusses the structuring of a policy sector based on the youth unemployment issue. Factors such as the "reactive" stance of the Government on youth unemployment, explains the political salience of youth schemes. The actual implications of the hiving-off of functions from the central Government to a specialised agency (Manpower Services Commission) are considered. Second, it illustrates how youth unemployment proved to be a catalyst for an alternative policy environment in which training matters were drawn in (Moon, 1983a:302; see Chapter Two) and which led to a policy shift of long-term and wide consequences (definition of youth employment policy in terms of youth training). Third, it examines how the 'youth traineeship' related to the conventional pattern of industrial training, i.e.

apprenticeship and its institutional framework, and what political factors were involved in the period under consideration.

There are three sections in this chapter. The first centres on the emergence of the unemployment issue into the political agenda with particular reference to the Labour Government in 1974-1979; the second analyses the structuring and working of the policy sector; and, the third presents the shift from temporary measures to more permanent programmes.

Taking into account research findings concerning industrial training policies we shall use evidence from our data (5) in order to investigate how the long-established pattern of industrial training came under threat from the development of training measures for unemployed young people. The second half of the 1970's is focused on because this period includes the first years of the MSC and almost coincides with a period of Labour Government in office. However, the period before and after will also be considered.

5.2 YOUTH SCHEMES AND POLITICAL AGENDA

The host of youth schemes (Moon, 1983a) adopted in the 1970's were mainly a series of temporary and short-term measures. These measures did not stem from a comprehensive political blueprint presented in a Governmental white paper. There is no evidence that they were the manifest result of a latent and intended attempt by the Labour Government to set up "youth traineeship".

Debate about the new policy perspective for the training of youth started in the second half of the 1970's (TSA:1975; MSC, 1977a; DES, 1979). This perspective which began to take shape in the early 1980's, was the unanticipated outcome of a piecemeal sequence of decisions (6). This sequence had its origin in the area of policies geared to counteract youth unemployment in the 1970's.

This section deals with the Government's agenda by pointing out: first, the lack of continuity between the traditional training issues and the issues that emerged in the 1970's; second, the development of a specialised policy sector dealing with youth unemployment; and, third, the "symbolic" use by the Government of special measures while trying to cope with the political risks of youth unemployment.

5.2.1 Old and New Issues about Initial Training for Young People

A number of scholars agree that before the 1980's training has seldom been a major political issue in British politics (Mukherjee, 1970; Anderson and Fairley, 1983). Basic questions about industrial training (what it is, what is for, who is responsible, who pays for it...) have not been debated on the broader political scene; instead they were dealt with among employers, trade unions and Government. Assumptions about such issues underly and are reflected in the training reforms of 1964 and 1973 and constitute what has been called the "British approach to vocational training" (Norris and Thomas, 1982).

Skill shortages, the role of the Government in a voluntaristic system, and day-release education were among the training issues at that time. The fear of skill

shortages and the need to limit a purely voluntaristic system entered the political agenda in 1960's and in 1970's. Since the second world-war training reforms (in 1964 and in 1973) have been the result of direct and powerful interventions by Government; the content of reforms has been presented in white papers (HMSO, 1962; 1973) i.e. authoritative public policy statements, sometimes supported by previous reports (e.g. the National Joint Advisory Council, 1958). In both cases (in 1964 and in 1973) basic training arrangements were more directly addressed than in the following years. It is rather difficult to find similar procedures relating to youth training schemes such as YOPs and YTSs. Training issues were elaborated and embedded in a new type of policy document that in the second half of the 1970 bred current policy debate and policy formation, consultative papers, task group reports, and discussion documents.(7) However there was no initiative at the legislative level. The issues at stake such as the balance between the State and the market, and responsibility for training, were not directly addressed. Unlike in the 1970's it was not a matter of improving the existing system or of making it work.

There were 'narrow' skill training issues but not general 'transition from school to work' issues. That the majority of school leavers did not undergo training was not seen as a problem. The preparation for work issue was a novelty because it introduced an approach to problems, such as the transition or the initial training for young people, that had previously been either neglected or conceived in different ways. In the 1960's and early 1970's the problem of the transition from school to work was not of particular interest to political parties or to social partners. The dominant views about training were shaped by the existing system of industrial training, mainly that of the apprenticeship system. One of the

early concerns in the area of the training of young people was the implementation of compulsory day-release education. Although part-time education for all 15-18 year olds was advocated in the 'Fisher Act' (Finn, 1982a) in 1918 and day-release education was included in the 1944 Education Act, it was never fully implemented (Carter, 1966), this was mainly because of employer opposition as a result of its costs. During the 1970's, particularly in 1973 and 1976, campaigns were organised and pressure exerted on the Government by the Trade Union Congress (TUC), some training bodies (City and Guilds of London Institute, 1974), and sectoral teachers unions (ATTI). The Labour Party Manifesto in 1974 included the almost ritualistic promise of "compulsory paid day release".(8) Nevertheless it never reached the Government's agenda and remained one of the many examples of non-implementation in the training area.(9) In 1974 at the Trade Union Youth Conference it was noticed with regret that the Government had not incorporated proposals such as the compulsory paid day-release in the legislation (TUC, 1974:48). Other issues at stake - skill shortages, financial support from the Government, the voluntaristic system... - were continually debated but narrowly conceived in relation to industrial training and did not re-emerge before the youth schemes were well established i.e. at the end of the 1970's.

The perspective of foundation training for all young school leavers did not appear, as might have been expected, in explicit terms when emergency plans for tackling the predicted rise in unemployment were under consideration. A TUC discussion document bears testimony to this; it says:

"If high youth unemployment occurs once again...the TUC will wish to see urgent action taken on a large scale to provide worthwhile opportunities for young workers. Such measures should include an expansion of Community Industry and the Apprentices Award Schemes and the

provision of other training and educational opportunities". (TUC, 1974:47)

"Youth traineeship" was not anticipated in explicit agendas; its origin is to be found not in the past nor in the implementation of previous manifestos, but in the specific context of decisions taken by the Government while dealing with unemployment. It was not available on the political market; it did not reach the Government's agenda, it was somehow forced into it, ex abrupto. This requires, in the first instance, a reference to the political scene.

2.2 Policy Background to the Youth Schemes

Policy actions in favour of unemployed young people were not immediately conceived as a training affair in the period under scrutiny; nor was universal provision of youth training (for apprentices and non-apprentices) an earlier source of concern for bodies representing training interests (Industrial Training Boards and Training Services Agency). Instead schemes for unemployed people, such as the Job Creation Programme, the Work Experience Programme and the Youth Opportunities Programme, were instead well rooted in the specific context of the Labour Government's policies during the recession (1975-1978). Two aspects of the Government's policy are relevant here: the u-turn in its economic policy in the middle of the 1970s and the dislocation between macro-economic policy and a direct response to unemployment. Both meant a deep change in policy objectives and instruments, provided the hotbed for youth schemes and accounted for their political salience...

From 1975 onwards the Labour Government began to 'run after the events': the 'radical' programme was dissolved, the 'social contract'(10) became less a strategy for

reform and more a hidden way of introducing a voluntaristic income policy, and social objectives lost grounds in favour of economic objectives (Coates, 1980:4). This 'new realism', stemming from a reaction to the New Keynesian view, was presented by Prime Minister Callaghan at the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool in 1976 in these well-known terms:

"We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by taxes and boosting Government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists". (The Times, 29.8.1976:17)

Among the factors that led to this transformation, the economic performance of the British economy was crucial (persistent high rates of inflation; low rates of investment; heavy foreign debts; periodic currency crises). In political terms there was also increasing pressure on the part of the financial elites, one of the major sectors of British capitalism (Marsh and Grant, 1977; Marsh and Locksley, 1983), and of international groups and institutions such as the International Monetary Fund.

The new realistic economic philosophy (Mrs S. Williams: "We have to be realistic socialists", The Times, 1.10.1976:1) inspired the 1977 budget: an austerity programme giving first priority to the fight against inflation. The Government's policy although appreciated in principle by the opposition, was not applauded in all quarters. It was challenged by some trade unions (11) and some sectors of the Labour Party, but it remained, nevertheless, consistently supported by political leaders. The leaders were beating the drum of national crisis in an atmosphere of a "wide-spread feeling of a tragedy" and a "national rescue battle".

However highly committed to its economic objectives, the Government had to face the consequences of moving away from commitment to full employment, in particular to face unemployment figures reaching historical records. The choice between inflation and unemployment as a source of concern and a policy objective could not be seen in terms of simple priorities. Some incompatibility between them was unavoidable: pursuing an austerity programme was leading to more unemployment, but to cure unemployment by public spending would inevitably bring fuel to inflation. In this situation unemployment turned out to be an intractable problem. The Government could not prevent unemployment without prejudice to other policy objectives (decreasing public expenditure and reducing inflation). Moreover while stressing publicly that industrial recovery would fill lost jobs, the Government was aware that growth, unlikely at that moment, would not have provided automatically an answer to joblessness. (12) The so-called fight against unemployment was more similar to caring for casualties after or during the battle in a war hospital than launching a health promotion campaign.

The lack of alternatives was that the Government became primarily concerned with the political risks of growing unemployment. Political leaders and cabinet ministers often found themselves facing criticism over this issue. They dealt with this criticism either by defining the problem in a manner that could have avoided direct criticism of the Government or by referring to direct actions undertaken. In Parliamentary debate the problem was at times diffused by references to the world-wide recession, the volume of trade and the British share of such trade and the British lead in innovative actions in favour of unemployed people. The Government could not, however, escape from a crude assessment of the reality; in 1977 Mrs S. Williams said at the Conference "Youth

Charter Towards 2,000":

"We are seeing the increase of unemployment throughout the industrial world, and it is a problem for which we still have no real answer".
(The Times, 2.2.1977:3)

This was the setting of direct responses to unemployment based on special measures and "people-centred" programmes, as an alternative to structural and macro-economic policy. This dislocation (Moon, 1983b:30; 1984:37) between macro-economic policies and sectoral policies for unemployed people was the major political feature in the development of youth schemes. The political risks of unemployment, especially youth unemployment, were the major concern for the Government and provided criteria for evaluating the schemes. (13)

5.2.3 "The Need for Action"

Although it may prove difficult to identify a threshold of political intolerableness (Daniel, 1981; Sinfield, 1981), unemployment has always been considered a very politically sensitive issue. A Government cannot easily afford a "do-nothing option" in the face of recurrent historical record-breaking in unemployment figures (14), increasing media reaction, public opinion concern (15), opposition criticism and internal rows, riots and mass campaigns (16).

The "paroxysm of anxiety" which accompanied the increase of people out of work in the United Kingdom (The Times, 29.12.1977) reached its apex with youth unemployment in 1974-76 and 1979-1981. School leavers were the target group whose performance in employment was carefully scrutinised; this became particularly crucial in 1976 when the highest figures since the war were reached. The political debate was cyclically startled by

the unemployment figures of school leavers in January, June and August. (17)

In the context of the Government's economic policy and its steadiness, the "need for action" became inevitably the imperative of "being seen doing something". A way out of the crisis was sought in terms of a highly visible interventionist role for the Government.

The youth schemes with their segmented approach, their mixture of long and short-term goals, their frenetic succession, their pragmatic allure and technical feasibility fitted in remarkably well with the Government's policy. Piloting a scheme could be seen as an appropriate response to the political demand from Ministries for an immediate answer particularly given the lack of both funds and political support for wide range policy initiatives; however long term results of actions were considered to be relevant by training planners and managers, but not by politicians.

Parliamentary debate shows clearly how the Government used special measures in order to tackle political rows about the alleged complacency or the cosmetic role of its intervention. In 1976, while discussing the tragedy of the jobless, Mr Walker, Ministry of State for Employment, answered the opposition's claim that the Government was complacent by saying:

"The Government have taken a large number of measures to improve the job and training prospects for young people. The adequacy of these measures is under constant review". (House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates First Series, Vol. 914, Session 75-76 p.601)

There was in the debate an ingenious and constant balance between direct and indirect objectives and between contrasting statements, between limits (the

programme was not meant to end unemployment) and valuable aspects (young people gain experience, the programme provides a temporary relief). Mr Booth, Secretary of State for Employment, while discussing the Job Creation Programme, provides an example of how it is possible to avoid a direct assessment of such programmes:

"Nobody pretended that the JCP was an answer to the appalling problem of unemployment, but the Government still felt that it was a worthwhile scheme". (The Times, 7.1.1976:3)

In his Parliamentary statement about youth unemployment, Mr Booth emphasised that "a number of steps have already been taken" and that:

"the Government have decided to take further action and they will build up a package far greater than any other in this country during a period of depression. I accept that the measures are short term but they are set in the context of long term measures already announced... I do not accept that these measures are purely cosmetic. They have a contribution to make to the job opportunities of young people. These measures alone could not solve the fundamental unemployment problem..." (House of Commons, Parliamentary Debate Vol.916. Session 1975-1976, p.1444-5)

The success of the programme is difficult to evaluate but estimates point out that in 1976-1977 special measures undertaken by the MSC and the Department of Employment resulted in the lowering of unemployment among young people at the beginning of 1977 by as much as 85,000-90,000 (Hutchinson, 1978:53).

For the Government it was paramount to be seen doing well by the Trade Unions (Barnes and Reid, 1980; Gregory and Noble, 1982). Unions concern about school leavers out of work led to pressing calls for a change of policy, the end of the "social contract", and the establishment of universal day-release education for 16-19 year olds.

J.Milne, general secretary of the Scottish Trade Unions Congress, summarised this position in 1976 with these words:

"One concern of the Congress was to maintain a Labour Government but unemployment was an issue on which the Government could be judged". (The Times, 26.8.1976:1)

However, pressure from Trade Unions was not enough to bring more than a few token measures. In fact the TUC itself was active in promoting new measures, welcoming the launch of WEP (The Times, 22.7.1976:2) and of YOP (The Times 19.3.1977:1). Sometimes the TUC was very positive about the action promoted by the Labour Government. For instance, a comment in 1976 on Governmental special measures was as follows:

"Full mark to the Chancellor and the Employment Secretary (Mr Foot) for today package evidences that the Government is taking the nation's unemployment problems with the seriousness it warrants". (The Times, 13.2.1976:19)

It seems that there was a symbolic pay-off of special measures (Moon, 1983: 1; 23). Training is more often used as a policy instrument, more than as an end in itself (Norris and Thomas, 1982). In this case youth schemes and the related "vocational preparation" perspective became politically salient in the context of crisis management (Richardson and Henning, 1984:4). The implications of this Government's stance were far-reaching.

5.2.4 An Incidental Policy

By tracing the new perspective for youth training back to the early youth schemes during the 1970's, it may be concluded that the Government, at Prime Minister and Cabinet level, did not play an anticipatory and direct

role. First, the "universal foundation training" was not a latent issue, although some elements, e.g. workplace experience, existed in previous years. Neither was it designed by the Government's advisers. Second, the Government provided the political impetus that accounted for the unexpected speed in operation (e.g. in acting decisively on the recommendations of the working party in 1977), but acted indirectly. The origin of the policy in term of content and of initiation must be traced elsewhere.

The main role of the Government in the process of policy initiation was to set up a political framework and to use the special measures in political terms. This stance may have been a consequence of a certain dissolution and disintegration of the centre (Jordan and Richardson, 1979:58) or a reaction to its overloading. Even the Department of Employment, identified with the traditional approach to training, seems to have been bypassed by the Department of Employment group, i.e. a network substituting for the missing centre.

The Government was forced to rely on the support of and technical proposals made by outsiders. The role of groups and bodies in the development of "vocational preparation" was without precedent in previous training reform.

Training initiatives were not only in line with the Government's policies, but also with the British policy style. The need to accommodate and to negotiate in order to avoid conflicts and confrontation, particularly likely in connection with sensitive issues such unemployment, became a political strategy adopted, openly and even unconsciously, by the Government. (18) Subsequently when special measures were fairly well established, the Government's policy community was radically modified.

5.3 THE DIRECT RESPONSE TO YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Considering the Government's attitude towards unemployment (See above Sect.5.2.3), it is not completely clear how "vocational preparation" emerged as a central issue. The policy context provides an insight into the political salience of direct action, but leaves in the dark the actual process of policy definition.

In fact the policy process did not just involve the Government, its Departments and clients; it took place in a wider setting in which many "actors" interacted with the Government in designing and implementing youth schemes.

The purpose of this section is to outline the structure of this policy sector. Four dimensions will be considered: early and recurrent attempts to define action to be taken; action plans and options identified; the resource mechanism and its policy implications; the network of organisations and groups and the interest structure built into this policy area.

By sketching the main features of this "policy community" the catalytic function of youth unemployment in provoking policy change becomes apparent. At the same time, it helps in the specification of the Government's role in setting up "youth traineeship". The Government was not just the cashier, nor the invisible hand behind the scenes. The way in which the schemes were designed and operated bears testimony to a remarkable change under way in policy formation and administration in the United Kingdom. In this new pattern the centre of policy-making

was difficult to identify. Jordan and Richardson sees the centre as a group of actors they call the Department of Employment group, i.e. the MSC and its allies (See above Sect.5.2.4).

5.3.1 "There is Work to Be Done"

In a context of rising youth unemployment and Governmental impetus towards action, it is apparent why the search for solutions was crucial. Working out proposals for coping with the situation of school leavers out of work became a relevant component of the policy-making process. Professional expertise and political ingenuity were largely enmeshed in this process.

Although there were antecedents for an unemployment policy in the United Kingdom (Rees and Rees, 1982), the situation was generally perceived as a new one. No consolidated and tested counter measures to be adopted appeared to be available.

The importance of this solution-searching was noticeable from the first half of the 1970's in attempts to prepare emergency plans under the threat of and in the prospect of a worsening situation. With hindsight, three reports which influenced the field of action, which identified policy options and which presented feasible programmes can be identified.

The first official document in this area was the 1974 report on the "Unqualified, untrained and unemployed" compiled by a working party set up by the National Youth Employment Council after the 1971-1972 economic crisis (DE, 1974). The report originated from the concern of Careers Officers about the difficulties which young people without qualifications encountered in finding a

job. The report, which included a comparative section, denounced the problem of young people leaving school without qualifications. It also questioned the assumption that this problem was the result of structural weakness in education and training in the United Kingdom, i.e. the lack of training in occupations below craft level. The report ended with recommendations aiming at reducing the vulnerability of the "unqualified" to cyclical change. Among these, the report outlined a multipurpose scheme for preparation for employment, based on previous suggestions by the Institute of Careers Officers and providing "an opportunity for all young people under 19 years of age to receive systematic training and development" (DE, 1974:44). An extension of TOPs to young people was not seen as an adequate solution because "what is needed is...a junior opportunities scheme, devised specially for young people" (1974:42).

At its first meeting in 1974 the MSC decided to devote its primary attention to youth unemployment and commissioned Mukherjee, an expert on active manpower policies, to report on possible measures to be taken in case of rising unemployment. In his report Mukherjee (1974) separated structural from cyclical aspects of unemployment, and analysed the composition of the labour market ("young prime age adults" and the outer labour market, i.e. the young and the old). He suggested the launch of job creation programmes in order to counter cyclical aspects of unemployment and the expansion of training for structural aspects (mainly skill shortages). He recognized that:

"...training could, to the extent that the information system allows, be directed to building up a stock of manpower with the kind of skills which may be helpful in preventing the emergence of skill shortage when the economy returns to a higher level of activity" (1974:70).

The TSA 1974 plan laid down prospective developments for training for the period 1976-1981. It did not include explicit solutions for young unemployed people; however, it clearly said that a major programme to improve training for wider sections of young people was needed and pointed out that in the event of economic recession special action should be taken by the agency (MSC-TSA, 1974:20).

However, these solutions were never defined once and for all, and nor did all the proposals become plans for action: it was a continuous process in which individuals, groups and organisations were involved and consultation machineries were set up. Assessment and relaunching and replanning were parts of the same process. The MSC itself devoted part of its activity to this proposal-forging.(20) This atmosphere of an open workshop was cunningly exploited by politicians in order to meet opposition demands and to restore credibility to a Government providing a few tokens to hundreds of unemployed people. From a newspaper report we read that:

"In seeking to introduce employment measures they were exploring virgin territory. They were conducting a human laboratory experiment finding which ideas would work and which would provide a solution to specific unemployment problems. No country has been successful in coming up with a single measure which would end the scourge of unemployment". (The Times, 1.4.1977:6)

More explicitly in a Parliamentary debate Mr Booth, Employment Secretary, turned what is usually seen as a piecemeal approach into a sort of deliberated policy strategy:

"I do not accept that we are incapable of dealing with this problem. We have attacked it at the point of the school-leaver with a considerable measure of success. In succeeding years we have

developed more effective measures". (House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, Vol.931. Session 1976-1977, p. 209))

At times there seemed to be an open, future-oriented atmosphere and a genuine search for effective solutions. In this context overseas experiences (e.g. the Canadian job creation programme, Moon, 1983a:323) and European examples became significant, and support and advice of experts was sought and provided. (21)

5.3.2 Availability of Finance

A basic dimension of a policy community is its resource dependence; the level of resource availability account for policy creativity and inventiveness. At first sight, the amount of money made available for the special youth schemes and the speed with which the MSC received the requested funds, are hardly understandable in light of ongoing public expenditure cuts, particularly in education, and of general restraint in spending money for social purposes (Dutton, 1982). The general climate was certainly not favourable to the expansion of a new education and training sector. This apparent contradiction can be explained by referring to the policy environment and by revealing the way in which resources were made available.

The political salience of the issues involved in the youth schemes was one of the main reasons why the Government was apparently generous in meeting most of the MSC's demands. Each amount of money devoted to special unemployment measures could be presented as a further step in the fight against unemployment. This put the MSC in a strong position not because of its institutional links with the Government, but because of the political pay-off of the actions promoted by the MSC.

This does not mean that resources were easily available; the original plan for an overall manpower approach (see Mukherjee's proposals) were watered down because they were too expensive. It may be possible to argue that the piecemeal approach itself was imposed, among other factors, by a shortening of cash. (22) The resources were made available for each single scheme, sometimes by supplying funding inadequate to meet the request, or by delaying the launch or development of special programmes.

It is worth noticing some of the implications of this context for resource allocation. In terms of resources, schemes were preferable to paying unemployment benefit or full pay as in regular public sector jobs. It strengthened the MSC's position in relation to bodies with interests in this area; as a sponsoring body it enjoyed large discretionary power (Howells, 1980:303-313) in allocating grant scheme. At the same time many groups had a more direct access to the Treasury (Grant and Marsh, 1977:139).

The availability of European resources from the ESF was taken into account. For example, while launching the WEP, "the Government is confident that much of the cost of its plan will be met by the ESF" (The Times, 4.8.1976:1). (23)

Later developments led the Government and the MSC to press for greater contributions from employers. The instance of this took place in discussions relating to the launch of a two-year YTS. At this point, the long-standing issue of finance was highlighted. As Mr Brian

Nicholson, MSC chairman, stressed:

"When push comes to shove, the thing is going to work or fail on the funding issue". (Financial Times, 28.5.1985)

In the early 1970's, this public funding of youth training (Pettman, 1974) was almost irrelevant (Drake, 1980:48) in a system of private funding of training. The youth schemes marked a change in the funding system of training in the United Kingdom towards the increasing involvement of the Government's funds (Lees and Chiplin, 1970; Hartley, 1974; Drake, 1980). (24)

5.3.3 Policy Network and its Source of Direction

Policy-making in the vocational training area has often been confined to a small policy community (Stringer and Richardson, 1982:). There is little basis for comparisons with the network developed in relation to special measures for young unemployed people. Here there was a high level of fragmentation and an "unpredictable wide number of groups in rather unstructured relations" were involved (Jordan and Richardson, 1982:81).

The number of organisations and interests involved crossed the more conventional division of policy sectors (Munby, 1978; Stringer and Richardson, 1982; Moon and Richardson, 1984a). These organizations and interests included education sector, trade unions, training bodies, the business community, teachers's unions (NAHT, NAFTHE, ATTI), the career service, local authorities, professional associations, private large companies, pressure groups (youth lobby), and the research bodies (Raffe, 1984a).

The relationship among these bodies was something new: the functions fulfilled by all these actors varied from consultation to co-operation, from definition of proposals to involvement in the delivery machinery. All these functions tended to consolidate the legitimacy of the actors in the policy-making process.

The interaction between these actors was explicitly organised by the MSC and also by some forums provided by BACIE Conferences. Training interests (ITBs) were less directly involved at the beginning; however, some such as the Rubber and Plastics Reprocessing Industrial Training Board (RPRITB) were active in studying the problem of young school-leavers.(25) In recent years they became more influential in forcing the move from one-year to two-year programme firmly based on the provision of specific occupational training.

The role played by the MSC and the part played by professionals had long-term consequences. First, the MSC provided a unique opportunity for members of the network to have access to policy formation and implementation. In fact the making of decisions was less based on the Government, its Departments and their clients and more on the MSC and its group network in bargaining with the Government.

Second, the lack of rigid boundaries and the consultation approach led, to some extent, to the co-option of specialised knowledge into the policy process (26); the "youth traineeship" did not just reflect the interests of the groups involved, it put into practice what, at that time, was circulating among experts concerned with the transition from school to work. In this context the MSC played a pivotal role. Placed in a structural position that gave it some independence, the MSC operated under an agreement with its Minister and not

in accordance with duties specifically entrusted to it by Parliament (Ridley, 1984:64). It was the MSC that gave the sense of direction (27), that placed short-terms measures in perspective and that managed to link the present to future perspectives. In 1976 the Chairman of the MSC, presented in this way a link between present and future as follows:

"The Commission has always been determined to ensure that as many young people as possible acquire the skills that will enable them to take full advantage of economic recovery when it comes. That will ensure that the nation has a pool of skilled people ready to produce the job. And of course people with skills are much less likely to be unemployed". (The Times, 13.2.1976:19)

The fact that the MSC was responsible to the Employment Secretary and not subject to day-to-day Parliamentary questions and the fact that the TUC and the CBI could not match the organisational strength of the MSC provided a positive condition for an unprecedented development.

5.3.4 The Interest Structure

As discussed earlier (Chapter Two:Sect:2.4.3) training always concerns trade unions and employers. Since 1964 there have been institutional frameworks which include these two groups for dealing with training matters (ITBs) in the United Kingdom.

Generally speaking a bilateral or tripartite approach "whereby the power of the state elites come to be exercised in collaboration with business and union elites" (Ham and Hill, 1982:40) limits the role of pressure groups and lobbies. This approach is connected

with the concentration of policy-making activities (Richardson and Jordan, 1979:97).

In the case of youth schemes there was a balance between the fragmentation induced by the numerous groups involved and the issue of "order" and "regulation" determined by the basic consensus of trade unions and employers on the Government's decisions.

It is worth noticing that it was a soft tripartism. Although the MSC was a new type of organisation inspired by a philosophy of tripartism, other powerful groups joined in; there was no formal Governmental representation; the TUC (28) and the CBI lacked centralised strength and, above all, the consensus they gave was minimal. The MSC's power may largely be accounted for by the fact that both the TUC and the CBI are "loose confederations rather than well-disciplined hierarchies" (Clegg, 1976:46; Grant and Marsh, 1977:146; Robinson, 1981:145). In addition by participating in the Commission the TUC and the CBI could not easily blame the Government for the MSC's decisions. The TUC and the CBI could not commit their members to supporting MSC's policies. Finally, constraints were put upon the TUC and the CBI by their limited resources which could not compete with the growing complexity of the MSC.

The trade unions' position (Barnes and Reid, 1980:191-228; Gregory and Noble, 1982) on youth schemes was not unanimous. The reasons for this are linked to the complex structure of British unionism (Clegg, 1976:31-32) (25). Craft unions concentrated on training for craftsmen, technicians and technologists, while "general worker" unions were in favour of generalised training. Some unions objected to the Government's economic policy, calling for an expansionist policy. Others did not co-operate in the implementation of the scheme. Others

voiced a variety of criticisms and reservations about employers' use of youth schemes, particularly of WEEP (Trade Union Research Unit, 1980). As one senior trade unionist put it in an interview for this research, the MSC obtained the consensus of the representatives of the TUC participating in the Commission's work, not necessarily of the TUC itself. Members of the Commission were not delegates of the TUC (Grant and Marsh, 1977:142). This led to a sort of ambivalence on the part of the TUC: while expressing reservations about special schemes for their aspect of "cheap labour", it co-operated in designing the schemes (see the case of WEP in The Times, 22.7.1976).

These mixed feelings (Raffe, 1984) were shared by other groups, such as Youthaid, which was divided between the call for "decent, well-paid employment" (Youthaid, 1979 foreword) and their own involvement in the operation, design and assessment of youth schemes.

In their reaction to WEP and YOP employers attitudes were not, in general, any more enthusiastic. This was in a way in line with the attitude of the CBI towards Government, that Grant and Marsh so present:

"At the stage when the CBI is having meetings with Ministers, it is probably fighting openly stated policies rather than influencing the long-term development of those policies". (Grant and Marsh, 1977:137)

The position of employers in 1976, while the Government was planning the WEP, may be summarised by this account of a meeting between CBI president and the MSC chairman:

"The president of CBI discussed with the chairman of the MSC...and the CBI Council indicated its full support in principle for a programme of this kind, provided that practical arrangements could be worked out satisfactorily and that no costs

had to be borne by employers other than that of organising the programme". (CBI Education and Training Bulletin, 3.Aug. 1976:1)

YOPs did not received a warmer welcome:

"Not to provide such opportunities would be costly in social terms, and, in the absence of viable alternatives the CBI supported the programme but drew attention to number of points..."(CBI Education and Training Bulletin, 7.2.July 1977:1)

These elements (consensus in principle and realistic stance) bear testimony to the minimal consensus given both by employers and trade unions and their sticking to their basic positions about funding, content and structure.(29) These attitudes comply with the British version of tripartism depicted by Richardson and Jordan (1979:51). According to these two authors:

"The CBI and the TUC appear to recognise that some compromise is required even if they cannot share explicit long-term goals. The basis for negotiation is not consensual agreement on basic policies but a recognition that a policy is needed". (1979:51)

Certainly at the time, the TUC was broadly satisfied with the grass roots of training undertaken by training boards; moreover some changes, e.g. "training for standards", were under way. The main concern of employers was to avoid collective funding of the training measures or any increase in the amount to be spent on training.

5.3.5 A New Policy Environment for Dealing with Training Matters

The dimensions referred to above are not exhaustive: however, they shed a light on the way in which the "direct response to unemployment" became a wealthy policy sector. By direct action we mean basically action centred

on people-based programmes and programme-based policies rather than structural policies. The political salience of youth schemes in the Government's policy and the role played by education and training lobbies provided the necessary strength and ideological support while the MSC provided the required political and managerial skills. At the same time all these aspects may help us to understand how the problem of unemployment was removed from the "explicit policy agenda" (Raffe, 1984). These developments did not challenge traditional industrial training until they were well established; however they largely contaminated training policy. This situation was not substantially modified in the following years when a Conservative Government was in office. Political consensus about the need of permanent provision of training for the youth created in the 1970's remained afterwards in a context of political conflict (Finn, 1982a:232).

5 4 TOWARDS TRAINING FOR ALL YOUNG SCHOOL-LEAVERS

This section argues that from 1974 to 1979 the "vocational preparation", gradually defined a specific policy avenue of action which was without precedent in British training policies. In 1981, an MSC document presented the new policy aim as follows:

"All young people should receive good quality basic training as a foundation for work and for further training and re-training, and...for all young people this process must begin at school and end in work" (MSC, 1982a:5)

5.4.1 Ideological Change

At a general level, the 1970's showed a change in the way education and training were conceptualised. A public debate (30) about educational objectives took place. There was a growing awareness among policy-makers of radical change of meaning; the debate on schools, attacks on comprehensiveness in secondary schools, discussions about the low attainment of pupils leaving schools, the emergence of an anti-education lobby (Walton, BACIE Journal, April 1976:71), the effect of the Great Debate (30) launched by the Government itself in 1976 all greatly affected views and expectations about education and training.(31)

The position taken by A.Smith, chairman of School Council, was reported by The Times in these words:

"A.Smith said that many people in school despise industry. Education has become an industry in its own, a self-servicing, self-perpetuating industry to provide...rejecting any serious economic responsibility. For this morally reprehensible stance the education service has no right in my judgement to a larger portion from the resources of our struggling national economy". (The Times, 30.12.1976:2)

There was a growing consensus about the breakdown between needs of employers and the characteristics of the school system, in particular of young people leaving school. The need for a link between schools and general economic policies was stressed in an official document:

"It is vital to Britain's economic recovery and standard of living that the performance of the manufacturing industry is improved and that the whole range of government policies, including education contribute as much as possible to improving industrial performance and thereby increasing the national wealth". (DES, 1977:6)

The 1974 NYEC report reflected these changes in the following terms:

"It is important to define clearly what we mean by 'training'. We do not use this term in a narrow, vocational sense, although vocational training of the kind provided by many employers is included...we use the term 'training' in a broad sense to cover the learning and acquisition of any skill, ability or attribute which is needed to equip the boy or girl, as an individual to obtain or retain a satisfying job". (DE, 1974:41)

And this was not a minor change; in a MSC-TSA document it is recognised that:

"One of the achievements of the existing national training effort has been to broaden the understanding of what training is about". (MSC-TSA, 1974:2)

In the United Kingdom, the youth scheme opened "a general discussion on the training of young people" (MSC-TSA, 1975:1). The preparation for work for young unemployed people (32) provided a good chance for a definition of "what training is about" and led to a reaction against the liberal tradition by breaking the barriers between education and training. Under the actual or prospective threat of unemployment, there was a call for action in favour of target groups for whom training had not traditionally been considered necessary. (33) In particular there was a growing awareness that training was needed for people below craft level and for people not in the industrial sectors where there was provision for training through apprenticeship.

Research centres and specialised agencies (Stern and Hilgendorf, 1982) became involved in a considerable amount of work related to and work experience and training programmes. A set of educational, social and economic aims were included in the "preparation for work" (DE, 1974:44). (34) These aims were gradually embedded in

the youth schemes and adopted and implemented part of these schemes. In this context, it is apparent that Community Industry, for example, which was aimed at improving the personal qualities of the long-term unemployed, and the JCP, although not intended to be a learning programme, both included provision for the opportunity to learn skills which would be of value to the young in seeking future employment. As Mr Booth Secretary of State for Employment said, the WEP placed more emphasis on giving participants "a realistic introduction to the requirements, discipline and satisfaction of working life". (The Times, 4.8.1976:1) and, thus, enhancing their chance of employment.

These were the terms in which the perspective of a more universal and permanent initiative was presented in 1975-1977. By considering the "group not receiving long-term training", the 1975 TSA discussion paper on vocational preparation noticed that "no lasting solution can be looked under the existing system" and claimed that "a more radical solution will almost certainly be needed". In 1977 the BYC report called for an "integrated system" of vocational preparation for all school leavers. And the aim of the working party set up by the MSC in 1977 was:

"to study the feasibility of putting into effect an objective of ensuring that all those in the age bracket 16-18 who have left school and are not engaged in full-time education and are unable to get a job should have the opportunity of training or of participating in programmes such as JCP and WEP". (MSC, 1977a)

The call for a "single, coherent and comprehensive programme" found its ideological support in the concept of vocational preparation, i.e., as it was defined later in 1981, "the systematic preparation for working life aiming at promoting personal development, improving performance at work and adaptability". (MSC, 1981f:67-8)

It is an obvious conclusion that it was not just a question of measures against unemployment; in the words of an MSC document it was "making the best of the misfortune of youth unemployment" (MSC, 1979:1). As a result of this process there was a change of emphasis (Raffe, 1983; 1984a) and unemployment disappeared from the explicit policy agenda. A problem about young people and work became identified as a problem about their education and training (Finn, 1982a).(35) Subsequently the development consolidated this change. YTS were presented some years later as "first and last training measures" (DE, 1981:9).

5.4.2 The Reduction of Alternatives

"Youth traineeship" was not the necessary and inevitable solution to the search for a satisfactory way out of the risks linked to the worsening unemployment situation in the middle 1970's. Socialisation into work and learning at work were the basic contents of youth training schemes. This was one of the available alternatives and it resulted from a policy dynamics which included the ruling out of other options, the compromise of employment and training measures, and the termination of other programmes (Moon, 1983a).

In general terms, this process resulted in a prevalence, in youth schemes, of training-centred measures. Employment-centred measures (Community Industry since 1972; RSSL from October 1975; YES from October 1976) were not completely ruled out, but they did not develop into a permanent form as happened in training. The process is clear in the succession of schemes and is related to many factors ranging from the success of the training lobby to the political suitability of training

for the Government in office, and to MSC corporate strategy.

The need for an alternative to transfer payments (unemployment benefit) was widely felt at that time both at the national and international levels. The passive way in which the United Kingdom was dealing with unemployment had already been pointed out (Mukherjee, 1974).

Therefore the JCP was considered as a positive step forward. It was introduced in October 1975 by the MSC after consultation with the Government and representatives of employers and trade unions and after examining experiences in other countries (Jackson and Munby, 1982). It aimed at providing "worthwhile work for the unemployed" and a "benefit to the local community". However, it quite soon came under criticism as a superficial, window-dressing and cosmetic programme. (36) Such criticisms pointed out, at the same time, new avenues for intervention. In 1976, Mr Prior, opposition spokesman, said in a Parliamentary debate:

"We welcome any step that will help with the problem of youth unemployment and we believe that the schemes that he (Mr Booth, Secretary of State for Employment) has announced today will mean a great deal to those who are able to be helped...we consider that it is necessary to have greater work experience and greater training and less costly schemes of job creation..." (House of Commons, Parliamentary Debates, Vol.916. Session 1975-1976. pp.1443-4))

In 1977 the Commons' Expenditure Committee Report on JCP called for a new effort to combat unemployment among the 16 to 18 groups in these terms:

"The aim could not be met solely by a revised JCP working in isolation. This can play a part but the need is for something more comprehensive, offering experience in successive programmes, including training programmes, enabling those taking part to become better equipped to obtain a permanent job". (House of Commons, 1977:XXXVI.)

The successor scheme (WEP) targeted on a more specific age group (16-18) was launched in September 1976 as a response to school-leavers' worsening situations; it was based on "work experience" used before in connection with the introduction of workplace experience in secondary schools. WEP aimed at providing scope for "learning by doing" (MSC, 1977a:32). Both employers and trade unions criticised the scheme (The Times, 22.9.1976:4; 22.7.1976:2).

The general change in the perception of unemployment as being short-term and cyclical to being long-term and structural, cleared the ground for a convergent call for a more comprehensive and co-ordinated approach, a master plan for a rationalisation of actions with particular attention to be paid to school leavers without qualification (a long standing issue) (37).

References to training in a broader sense were crucial for the setting up of the umbrella scheme, YOP. While presenting this new step, Mr Booth, the Employment Secretary, said:

"It meets the criticism that existing programmes do not provide adequate training for young people by integrating a series of measures for young unemployed people in the 16 to 18 age group which will provide them with a combination of training and work experience... we regard the programme as a long-term one in comparison with the project it will replace". (The Times, 30.6.1977:8)

As an umbrella scheme it incorporated a variety of types of work experience and work preparation courses run by the TSA. In 1977 the training element was dominant in the youth schemes. Training was to enhance the skills and personal development of young people and to compensate for any deficiencies in their education and to offer training in basic social skills: this definition was

different from the conventional definition of industrial training (Ryan, 1984). The growing scale of the YOP 160,000 young people in the first year [1978-1979; 450,000 in 1982-1983] supported the change in ideology.

There are many factors that could be referred to in explaining why, apart from its political pay-off training became a dominant issue. The first is the institutionalised commitment to training policy by the MSC and other training bodies such as ITBs. Moreover, there are justifications for training on economic grounds on the basis of change in the qualification structure of employment following the decline of manufacturing industries. This also took into account policy objectives ("training for stock" having long been an issue in this policy areas as well as long-term training needs). Research carried out at the end of the 1970's and in the early 1980's showed the deficiencies of the British labour force when compared with that of other countries (Daly and Jones, 1980; Prais, 1981; Jones, 1982; Daly, 1982; 1986). The awareness of structural deficiencies (only 15 % of the age group were in apprenticeship in the United Kingdom), the bleak perspective for future employment and the long-standing criticism of the apprenticeship system ("time consuming", "part of restrictive practices") (CPRS, 1980) supported an effort to deal on a large scale with the initial training of young people. The failure of employers to provide enough training and their reluctance to accept some form of collective funding, stressed the need for a direct public policy. The increasing number of training interests involved in the youth schemes and the move from a first stage based on voluntary organisations and local governments to a larger involvement of the business community provided the necessary network support.

To some extent the results of these policy dynamics through a succession of schemes and the move towards a comprehensive system of vocational preparation, were anticipated in the NYEC report when, in 1974 (See Sect.5.3.1). The drawing in of vocational training in unemployment policies (Moon, 1983a) reached with the YOP a first crucial step with the MSC being the main actor in this development.

5.4.3 Vocational Preparation: Whose Task?

This chapter analysed policy dynamics in terms of programmes and their content. Alternatives existed not only at the level of policy content, they were also at the administrative level. From this point of view vocational preparation arose apparently in a sort of no-man's land: therefore its institutional setting, the "MSC servicedom", was not given but grew alongside the development of the policy perspective. This was a two-sided process based on the failure of other alternatives and the increasing strength of the MSC.

Tracing back to the early 1970's neither bodies representing training interests (ITBs or TSA), nor the newly-born MSC, nor the education system seemed particularly equipped for dealing with the problem of youth unemployment or for launching the "universal basic training" for young school leavers. There was, however, a substantial difference in the willingness, potential and ability to accept the challenge of youth unemployment: the MSC remained unrivalled from this point of view.(38)

The Department of Education was struggling in poor and weak conditions with political and economic constraints (Coates, 1980:37) due to its internal crisis induced both by national and international pressures. It was hamstrung

in its initiative by the decentralised power structure. This affected the basic philosophy:

"...what has been called the 'dialectic' within the department between those who see education primarily as a tool of individual enlightenment and those who place greater stress on its practical uses, has swung in favour of the latter". (The Times, 15.12.1976:2)

The education system was, therefore, easily bypassed in the response to unemployment, but not without conflicts. (Atkinson, Rees, Shone and Williamson, 1982:127; Finn, 1982b:47)) On the other side, the strength of the MSC (Finn, 1982a:237ff; Markhall and Gregory, 1982) in this field was based on political, managerial and financial factors. The MSC moved from a weak body for the assessment and determination of manpower requirements to a centralised policy body that started to run its own programmes for the unemployed in parallel with the agencies (TSA and ESA) supported by the TUC and the CBI. From the original small staff of civil servants the MSC expanded rapidly to employ about 25,000 by the end of the 1970's; the budget grew, consequently, from L 125 million to over L 600 million in just five years. From a political point of view the Government's tripartite approach and the special status of the MSC were sources of strength. Several influential managerial factors (39) have been pointed out in the literature. These included central capability, determined, widely experienced and energetic managers operating in a favourable climate of resources (Howells, 1981:328), organisational philosophy, and an expansion strategy based on setting up fresh organisations and office networks rather than relying on existing ones. (40) From a financial point of view the growth in expenditure was a pre-condition for such a development.

The allegation of "empire building" (Mark, 1977) is current in the debate; (Benn and Fairley, 1986) however, it may be misleading to think of a new super organisation. The structure of intervention based on programmes and the setting up of an implementation structure, the penetration of the existing system of education (Further Education, Schools (41)), and training (ITBs), led the MSC to act as a mobilising agency rather than as a traditional delivery machinery, such as a Department. In this new type of delivery system giving room for decentralised forces and several bodies such as local Governments (Peck, 1980; MSC, 1981c; Gregory, 1984). Those in the Further Education sectors were also accommodated. Ridley in his study of the JCP identifies the way in which the programme was administered by pointing out the role of MSC:

"MSC was essentially a rule-making, funding and auditing organisation: the actual management of job creation projects was in the hands of 'sponsors', who devised schemes within the rules and presented them for approval". (1984:55)

Compared with previous training reform, vocational preparation was not a departmental policy, nor a voluntaristic area of action. It enjoyed a good degree of self-regulation under the aegis of the MSC approaching what has been called the franchising of public policy. In this process of implementation, policies were adapted by compromise and exchange between organisations; programmes had to accommodate themselves to other elements (Ridley, 1984:72). The MSC and its affiliates ruled overwhelmingly. Despite changes of programmes, a certain amount of continuity in patterns of delivery system proved to be a factor of stability (Moon, 1983a:325)

5.4.4 Vocational Preparation and Industrial Training: Alternative, Replacement or Coexistence?

In the development of training policies during the 1970's and afterwards the largest watershed has been a conceptual one. Training since the end of the 1970's was no longer restricted to the policies embodied by ITBs or TSA; it was applicable to special youth schemes such as YOPs and later YTS. The revolution had its official version:

"The terms 'training' and 'education' have been commonly used as a rough and ready means of distinguishing between learning to perform specific vocational tasks (training) and the general development of knowledge, moral values and understanding required in all walks of life (education). But such definitions have obvious shortcomings... The concept of vocational preparation treats the entire process of learning, on and off the job, as a single entity, combining elements of training and education to be conceived and planned as a whole". (DES, 1979:10)

This change was largely reflected in the modification of the structure of public expenditure for training and its scale. In 1982-1983 about L 600 million were devoted to YOPs while only L 117 million of public funding was for ITBs in 1981-1982 (Ryan, 1984:33).

The assessment of this outcome is not beyond discussion. Fairley points out that "while the MSC and educationists often describe YOPs as training programmes, most young people get very little training" (1982:29). This is not just a problem of definition, but is part of the current political debate (The Times, 19.3.1977:17).

We have referred, in the previous pages, to some structural differences between vocational preparation and industrial training policies in terms of the structure of the policy community and the role of the Government. A

relevant difference also exists at the level of policy content. The new "bridge from school to work" has been designed and worked out in alternative terms to the existing apprenticeship system (Dutton, 1982:5). By considering the seminal elements in YOPs and the structure of YTS we can summarise the main contrasting elements as follows:

Apprenticeship

- (1) Minority learning key skills
- (2) Industry-based training
- (3) Training as the responsibility of trade unions or employers
- (4) Apprentice Status (Contract and wage)

Vocational preparation

- (1) Generalised training among young school leavers
- (2) Public-funded training
- (3) Training as a national aim
- (4) Trainee status (Allowance)

Of course it would be wrong to consider the relationship between the two only in alternative terms. The development of the youth traineeship was gradual and intermixed with other training issues. The training debate and its contents reinforced the "youth traineeship": the need for more training in Britain, the comparison with the West German model, the inadequacy of training, appeared in the debate about the universal broad-based training.

At a general level the situation changed from the middle 1970's to recent years; while before the two areas (apprenticeship and new training schemes) were adjacent, but to some extent autonomous, in the following years (mainly with YTS) they became more interrelated.(42)

Another factor that must be considered was the unsuccessful attempt to modify industrial training by introducing a revised form of levy-system (MSC, 1976b). (43) In 1976 the effort of reform did not obtain positive results. Facing criticism, the Government decided in 1977 not to proceed with collective funding proposals (Drake, 1980:50-51). It continued to press ITBs and the interested parties to change and hinted at new legislation if industrial training policy failed. More recently there has been a change in policies both from the point of view of the Government (abolition of most ITBs by the Conservative Government) (Fairley and Grahl, 1983:144) and from the ITBs themselves.

Aspects of a more integrated view of old and new were the basis for the recent Conservative policy on ITBs (Brown, 1983), the increased involvement of the MSC in the reform of apprenticeship, the use of youth scheme as an initial part of apprenticeship schemes. The process is not yet over; the 1970's just unveils the initiation of current developments.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The debate in the 1980's about YTS shows that policy-making was still in progress and there are no signs of policy termination. It would be hazardous to make overall generalisations from just one act of the play. However, by considering the case of youth schemes in the 1970's and the inception of "youth traineeship", we can put forward some considerations relevant for the understanding of training policies in the United Kingdom.

First, as in previous training reforms (1964 and 1973), the Government has used training as a means for

broader aims (Norris and Thomas, 1982), but, unlike in those earlier situations, it has been less directly involved in policy definition and implementation. The interventionist stance gave the impetus for an array of organisations and groups. Interventionist policy and indirect Government are the clues for understanding the salience of training, the working out of the policy option and its administration.

Second, the large and manifold policy community dealing with youth unemployment contrasted with the previously tiny policy sector of industrial training (Anderson and Fairley, 1982).

Third, professional lobbies had more opportunities than in the past for spelling out their technical views about transition from school to work and, this was crucial, to take part in the policy-making process.

Finally, there was a new policy environment for the adoption of training measures for young people which was accompanied by ideological processes leading to a re-definition of training and education. A new-born policy sector (unemployment policy) contaminated the training area and span over leading to an unanticipated policy carried out by strong administrative arrangements in line with the views of professionals.

During the 1980's there have been signs of a rearrangement of the game positions. The TUC, the Labour Party and the CBI have increasingly recognised the salience of training. Thus it has moved from an issue of marginal status to one of crucial priority. (44) These developments have affected the position of the MSC itself and its institutional links. While during the 1970's there was a sort of take-off stage characterised by an open field occupied by an active body and supported by a

crowd of groups and associations, unopposed by key organisations such as TUC and CBI, in the 1980's business, training interests, and political parties have entered the policy arena. Training has become a political issue.

As a low-institutionalised area, training is therefore subject to change. The Industrial and Training Act of 1964 has been rated as "an innovative experiment" (OECD, 1970:21). Vocational preparation seems to bear testimony to the dynamic aspects of British policy style. When consensus among key organisations does not concern agreed policies, but is a necessary compromise dictated by the situation, when policy overloading means hiving-off functions to an independent policy actor and when a reactive approach to problems force open searches for solutions, the outcome may be innovative.

Views and analytical perspectives (45) of the last ten years of training policies for youth differ. However there is no discordant view about the fact that they have presented a great breakthrough in the status quo of British politics.(46)

NOTES

(1) See, European Centre (1982b), for a basic description of vocational training in the United Kingdom. See European Centre, 1982b; see OECD (1970:67-80), for a critical appraisal of industrial training in the context of the manpower policy; see, McLaine (1948), Liepmann (1960) and Wheatly (1980), for the apprenticeship system. See Pettman (1974) and Pettman and Showler (1974) for the Government sponsored training in the early 1970's. See Mukerjee (1970) for an analysis of the 1964 Industrial Training Act and MSC(1980) for a review of the 1973 Employment and Training Act. See Anderson and Fairley (1983) and Stringer and Richardson (1982) for the policy study. See European Centre (1980c) for a bibliography on vocational training in the United Kingdom.

(2) Although the definition of youth by the responsible governmental bodies has been subject to some fluctuation, in the context of this research, it is taken to mean sixteen and seventeen year olds and occasionally to those a year or two older.

Training measures are those schemes with a training element in them; due to the variability of the concept of training it is taken here in its broad meaning which includes the preparation for work. More specifically the Work Experience Programme (WEP), the Unified Vocational Preparation (UVP), the Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) and the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) fall in the category of training schemes although the meaning of training varies from one scheme to the other.

Antecedents of these programmes were the Wider Opportunities Courses (WOC) (see ITRU, Widening Employment Opportunities). A report of an evaluation study of the Wider Opportunities Courses carried out for the TSA, 1977), the schemes developed locally (see DE, 1974:43) and the range of training courses sponsored by TSA (Occupational Selection Courses, Short Industrial Courses).

There is an immense literature about the youth schemes in the United Kingdom. The following references have been considered. Descriptive accounts in the international literature (Hutchinson, 1978); policy-oriented presentation and discussion in MSC documents; comparative approaches in the area of manpower policy studies; evaluative reports concerning individual schemes; analytical discussions in academic journals from a sociological point of view (Raffe, 1981b; Stafford, 1981; Finn, 1982a) from a policy study point of view (Moon,

1983a; 1983b; Atkinson and Rees, 1982; Dutton, 1981; 1982) and from an economic point of view (Ryan, 1984). A complete list of the various schemes and the sequence of inception and termination may be found in Moon, 1983a.

(3) See Makeham (1980), for a general view of youth unemployment; see Raffé, for a critical review of the explanations of youth unemployment. See also Chapter Four:Sect.4.4, for a cross-national view.

In the course of this Chapter school leavers or young school leavers are defined unemployed young people under 18 years of age who have not entered employment since terminating full time education.

(4) In this policy area concepts tend to be linked to the evolution of policies. We define the most common terms in the following way. Industrial training: the traditional apprenticeship system; youth traineeship: the set of perspectives for the preparation for work of young people including social and life skills and specific training for a job, workplace experience (the concept stresses the new general bridge between school and work); vocational preparation (or preparation for employment, DE, 1974:44): the emerging concept in the second half of the 1970s, it emphasises social and personal skills more than specific technical competence. Other terms used here are: universal training (Ryan, 1984) and foundation training (Hayes et al., 1985). See Werner (1980) and MSC (1981f) for a full list of definitions. See Chapter One Sect and Chapter Two:Sect.s1 and 2, for the definition of vocational training. See also Chapter Six:Sect.6.1, Chapter Seven:Sect.7.1, for the meaning of vocational training in Italy and in France.

(5) See Appendixes One, Two and Three for the sources of data and the technique used in the fieldwork.

(6) From an evaluative point of view, the youth schemes could hardly bear testimony to a 'rational' approach to policy-making. A report in 1976 by a consultancy firm about unemployment measures taken by the Government listed a series of criticisms: absence of clear goals, the effectiveness of policy instruments reduced by the confusion of roles, the piecemeal approaches to problems, the lack of consensus between Government, employers and employees (A case for Social Marketing, Metra Oxford Consulting Ltd., Oxford: 1976).

(7) The volume of the debate has been noticed (Norris and Thomas, 1982). The MSC discussion paper "A New Training Initiative" has been widely circulated (80,000 copies) and 1,000 submissions received (MSC, 1981a:44).

(8) Still in 1976, while giving his reaction to the highest unemployment figures for young people since the war, R. Jackson, secretary of the TUC Education Committee, called for the establishment of universal day release for all in the 16-18 age group (The Times, 25 June 1976:2).

(9) See Chapter Two Sect.2.4.5, for other notable cases of non-implementation.

(10) See Barnes and Reid (1980:191ff.) and Coates, 1980:2ff), about the 'social contract'.

(11) See the reactions of Trade Union leaders in February, August and October 1976. The Government was under pressure from the Unions particularly in the public sector, and from left wing groups calling for a change in the austerity programme.

(12) From data available at that time and projections made it appear that there was a change in the age structure of the population (Hutchinson, 1978). The number of young people entering the labour market was expected to continue to rise until 1981 after which the number of young people should decline. The MSC forecasted:

"After a period of stability, the number of young people leaving school will increase between now and 1980...there will be just over 900,000 school leavers in 1980-81 compared with an estimated 826,000 in 1975-76". (MSC, 1976:13)

A Working Group set up by the MSC commissioned three surveys concerning employers, young people and unemployed young people. The reports were published in 1978 (MSC 1978), however, the work done was at the basis of the Holland report (MSC, 1977a). This report presented three perspectives about the total level of unemployment and its future paths (MSC, 1977a:22-23). On the very favourable projection that assumed the economy would start to recover immediately and its recovery was sustained until full employment was reached in the early 1980's, unemployment among young people (16-18) would have remained very high (just under 180,000 in 1981). On the pessimistic projection that the unemployment level for 16-18 year olds could almost reach 450,000 in 1978 and still be 350,000 after the next two hypothesised years of recovery. The favourable perspective still suggested a peak of about 350,000 by the following year falling to 180,000 in 1981. For a critical appraisal of these projections see Hutchinson, 1978:40; 60-62.

From a qualitative point of view other considerations (decline in manufacturing industries, cuts in public expenditure...) suggested that the future pattern was likely to see an increased demand for the technicians and

"knowledge" workers, a decline in demand for craftsmen (leaving many young people of high ability who could formerly have entered apprenticeship to go into less skilled employment) and the increasing chance that youngsters without qualifications would be pushed out of employment all together, and unlikely to find work unless their skills improved.

In an interview a former chief executive of the TSA confirmed to us that emergency plans were commissioned and drawn because of the negative outlook. Political reasons prevented a more explicit discussion; negative projections were released when some action was going to be taken and used in order to justify the initiative.

(13) Raffe (1983) notes the lack of strategy and clear definition of objectives. We think that policy presentation, political criteria and technical decisions were enmeshed; moreover the Government and the MSC did not have always the same point of view in considering the measures.

(14) By looking at the unemployment figures a considerable increase in the rate of youth unemployment after 1974 is immediately apparent. In particular the focus was more on school leavers. The number of unemployed school leavers in July, August and October increased dramatically after 1974. In 1974 the figures were 14,000; 56,000; 13,400. In 1975: 55,300; 158,200; 65,300. In 1976: 109,100; 199,400; 78,000. In 1977: 241,600; 270,400; 92,600 (Makeham, 1980:84).

Registered unemployment among 16-17 year olds rose by 120 per cent between January 1972 and January 1977 compared with 45 per cent for the working population as a whole. The proportion of unemployed 16-17 year olds rose as a proportion of total unemployment from 5.4 per cent (January 1971) to 9 per cent in January 1977. See also Hutchinson, 1978:4-62.

(15) Moon (1983) analyses the findings of opinion polls over the period from 1970 onwards (1983) and finds that public opinion was very sensitive to rises in the number of young people registered as unemployed. The estimation of unemployment as the "most urgent problem" was very high in 1971-1972, in 1975, 1976, 1977 and in 1980-1981. See also Mungham, 1982. Husband has noticed a variation in the 1970's. While in the first part of the decade unemployment and inflation were affecting the level of the popularity of the Government, from 1974 to 1979 it was the level of real wages, more than unemployment the major factor eroding the credibility of the Labour Government (1975:14-15).

(16) See in particular marches and rallies organised (March and September 1976) by "Right to work campaign", the Tribune Group and the International Socialists. See also the "Youth Charter towards 2,000" (Conference held in Wembley rallying 1,300 delegates of youth groups in February 1977). In a cross-national perspective, the relationship between youth groups and trade unions has not been so strong in the United Kingdom as it has been in Italy and in France (Munby, 1978:189).

(17) Hutchinson (1978) points out that the initiative taken in 1977 was made possible by an improvement of the general economic situation (in 1977 the rate of inflation almost halved from an annual rate approaching 30 per cent).

(18) The consensual method was the standard procedure years later in a situation of more open political conflicts. In the 1980s the conflict between the Government's proposals and MSC proposals concerning the new schemes (NTY) seemed to have no loophole but the setting up of a Task Group.

(19) Representatives of CBI, TUC, NUT, ATTI, ICO and Youth Employment Councils in England, Wales and Scotland were the member of the National Youth Employment Council. The remit was "to investigate trends in opportunities below craft level and make recommendations" (DE, 1974:1).

(20) Among the "actors" more active in the proposals-preparing in 1976-1978: BYC (Report and contact with political leaders); ICO; Standing Conference on Youth Employment; TUC; Youthaid. The nature and aims of Youthaid are defined by its Director in these terms: "We see Youthaid as a research body trying to answer questions, to design plan and proposals to put to Government and public agencies". (The Times, 26.4.77:5)

(21) The study of foreign experiences and the comparison constitute almost a routine step in policy definition. As examples of this in the area we are dealing with: DE, 1974:78 (overseas experiences are examined); TSA, 1975:19 (the situation in the United Kingdom is contrasted with the practice in other countries (FRG and Sweden) where "training is given for occupations which in this country are regarded as non-skilled or semi-skilled"); MSC 1976a:31 (awareness that unemployment is not uniquely a British problem); MSC-TSA, 1977c:18ff. (comparison with training arrangements in other countries); Dyer, 1977 (study on the apprenticeship system in the FRG carried out for the MSC); Pettman and Fyfe, 1977:131ff. See also Finn, 1982a (role of comparison with other countries); Moon, 1983a (reference to the Canadian job creation programme). See Chapter Eight:Sec.8.5, for the European influence.

(22) Piloting was an alternative to a generalised policy (Interview). After the 1975 TSA document about vocational preparation the provision for all school leavers of a period of training for 6 to 12 months was scrutinised and costed. In following discussions with the Minister it appeared too expensive and without the necessary public support at that time. A pilot scheme, the Unified Vocational Preparation, was devised and launched instead.

(23) In the BACIE Journal allocation of the ESF resources were reported; see, for example, BACIE Journal, April 1979:56.

(24) The amount of public money made available for training increased by 208 per cent between 1972-1973 and 1978-1979. (Government' Expenditure Plan 1978-1979 to 1981-1982 Vol.2 Tab. 2.4.). In 1982-83 the scale of public funding for YOP was L 600m while in the following year 1983-84 the figure for YTS was L 845m (Ryan, 1984:33).

(25) While welcoming MSC proposals for action, Mr F.Metcalf, Director of the ELTB suggested in 1976 intervening in a BACIE Conference:

"An alternative view is that since first-year training at least makes no productive return, then it should be regarded as an extension of basic education and funded totally from the Exchequer." (BACIE Journal, April 1976:69)

(26) The way in which expertise and knowledge were channelled into policy formation is different from politics of advise, as this may be exemplified by the relationship between CPRS (Central Policy Review Staff) and the Government centre (Heclo and Wildawsky, 1974). Unlike CPRS, the experts participating in the consultancy machinery not only contributed the definition of the issues but also co-operated in creating interorganisational compromises and networks. See also the MSC sponsored research work carried out by University Departments and independent bodies; see, for example, the contribution by Youthaid (Youthaid, Annual Report, 1983;4-5)

(27) At a BACIE Conference held on 17 December 1975 Mr Cassels claimed:

"The MSC put forward to the Government Plans it had prepared for action in the face of this eventuality..."(BACIE Journal, April 1976:66).

See also, above, note 12 for this advance planning.

(28) Before the setting up of the MSC, the involvement of the TUC in the industrial training was limited to the participation in the Central Training Council a co-ordinating body among the ITBs (see TUC, Unions the TUC and Industrial Training, Report of a Second Conference of the Trade Unions Members of the ITBs, 29 oct. 1970.

(29) The response by the employers varied greatly. WEEP took place mainly in small, not unionised and low wage industry; in the large scale companies, the unions objected. See Pelican, 1977:144-5.

(30) The 'Great Debate' concerned school curricula, assessment of standards, teacher training, and relationship between school and work. Several regional conferences were held with representatives of parents, trade unions and employers taking part. See Finn (1982:45-6), for a summary of the debate.

(31) On several occasions employers attitudes emerged. In 1976 the Education Committee of CBI launched "Understanding British Industry", a seven-year proposal for 13-14 year olds in secondary schools. Complain about the inadequate standard in fundamental skills (reading, writing and arytmetics) were frequently expressed (see Mr T.Lyons, chairman of the CBI Education Committee, in The Times, 21 December 1976:2). The 1977 report by the EITB criticised the school because not adequately providing for industry's needs (EITB, 1977). Another report issued by the Engineering Employers Federation called for education reforms in order to meet the needs of industry and to encourage more qualified students to enter industry (Engineering Employers Federation, Graduates in Engineering, 1977).

(32) The schemes organised under YOP fall into two broad categories: work experience and work preparation. The Work Preparation Schemes include Employment Induction Courses, Short Training Courses and Remedial Courses. These schemes offer training at the semi-skilled level or provide the young basic social skills. Work Experience Schemes includes Work Experience on Employer's Premises (WEEP), Project based Work Experience, Training Workshop and Community Service. These schemes offer on-the-job work experience. The Unified Vocational Preparation Programme, a programme for employed 16-18 year olds in jobs with little or no training, provide basic jobs skills, social and life skills and induction to the jobs.

(33) (Interview). The dominant view about training in British industry and commerce was that an elite of highly educated and capable people could organise work in such a way that those at the lowest level only need to learn to

do what they are told to do. This is instrumental training or training people in task. Douglas Seymoor has pioneered the analysis of jobs and of consequent training needs.

(34) See for the concept of employability, Dr R. Johnson, Director of Training (MSC), "Employment and Employability", BACIE Journal, November 1979:179ff. A report by a task group (including experts from training centres, firms, schools, university, TUC and MSC) identified the following basic skills: (a) fundamental skills (literacy and numeracy, manual competence); (b) occupational skills (self management, working with adults, sharing responsibility, learning effectively, doing work on which others are dependent (MSC, 1979:Part III).

(35) It is interesting to note that dissent to the emerging perspective came from opposing quarters. The conservative sectors of the Further Education field opposed the provision of training instead of education; people with radical view criticised training because it tended to be in favour of employers' interest. In addition practitioners and people with expertise in industrial training criticised the schemes because of the poor quality training and called for quality and intensive training (interview).

(36) There was a debate about the pros and cons of JCP. The negative aspects were two. The National Federation of Building Trade Employers argued that certain jobs being carried out by the JCP ought to be carried out by the building industry and perhaps by apprentices in their industry. (The Times, 25.5.1977:14) Moreover, JCP finances relatively low-priority local authority jobs at a time when more important work was being cancelled because of economic cut-backs. By way of contrast, JCP could be considered a response to local need, administered with a minimum of bureaucracy, and with some positive effects on 'employability'.

(37) The main critical points were: the temporary nature of the schemes; a poor matching of local, regional needs; the inadequate provision for the least qualified people; and the variety of remunerations. See also The Times, 4 October 1976:3.

(38) MSC is outside the Government, but is financed by public funding and is staffed by civil servants. The commissioners come from employers, trade unions and from local Government and education. The development of MSC changed its original goals as they were perceived by some policy actors. From an interview to a former ITB chairman: "MSC was originally set up to consider our manpower requirements, what could we work out through the MSC was a package as to the employability in Britain and

once that was done, for the ITBs than to supply that need. The original intention of the MSC was not to become a medium of training, it was to assess and determine the manpower requirements. The ITBs were the bodies for to undertake the training and, of course, the University and the Polytechnics for the higher levels of training."

(39) The professional expertise and background of the MSC Chairman was well rooted in business, in management and in corporatist practices. In 1984, while the Government was looking for a successor to D.Young as MSC Chairman, A.Pike, industrial correspondent in The Financial Times wrote: "the main function of the new incumbent will be to take the role of evangelist in a crusade to reform industrial training and vocational education" (The Financial Times, 25.9.1984).

(40) Several arrangements were set up: Community Industry was run by a National Managing Board (TUC, CBI, Youth Organisations and DE); JCP was run by 10 Area Action Committees; WEP administered through 8 Area Offices; YOP by a Special Programmes Boards; YTS by managing agents.

(41) See Moon and Richardson, 1984b, about the Technical and Vocational Initiative providing technical education for 14-18 year olds in schools.

(42) The link between YTS and traditional industrial training was attempted by the CITB and the EITB.

(43) See the reaction by the Federation of Engineering Employers in The Times, 3.10.1976:22

(44) See 1983 Labour Party Manifesto ("our radical new scheme for young people will establish a new two year student traineeship for all 16 and 17 year olds. It will bring together for the first time, the first year for apprenticeship, other training schemes for young workers and the young unemployed and courses in full-time education in schools and colleges."); see also TUC-Labour Party Liaison Committee, The Training Challenge. The TUC-Labour Party Statement on Training, May 1984. See Brown and Fairley (1987), for a recent discussion about Labour Party training policy.

(45) See Raffae (1981:216ff.), for sociological perspectives.

(46) On 12-13 October 1981 a Special National Conference was organised in London by BACIE with a significant title "The Training Watershed".

CHAPTER SIX

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN ITALY

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Current images of the Italian policy system emphasise aspects of crisis and contradiction. They are based upon a huge literature (Graziano and Treu, 1979). Tarrow's view of Italian policy-making (sharing "public resources among a host of private claimants":1977:64) matches the "allotment system" ("many different interests distribute public resources and benefits among themselves") described by Amato (1976). Furlong terms the responses of Italian Governments to macro-economic problems in the 1970's "fractured, spasmodic and in-practice unpredictable" (1982:193). More dramatically other authors have questioned the very existence of a Government (Allum, 1973; Di Palma, 1977; Cassese, 1980).

The new strength of the Italian Parliament (Di Palma, 1979) and the decentralisation process have been considered as major changes in the 1970's. Such changes, however, do not undermine the dominant views we have referred to.

Traditionally based on public funding, and regionalised in the 1970's, vocational training in Italy (1) is a marginal sector compared with the school system and training directly provided by employers. Vocational training has only occasionally been analysed in policy studies. However, those few which have been conducted are of interest (Villa, 1982; 1983; Varesi, 1983; Garonna, 1986). In the literature (La Malfa and Serravalle, 1976; Ancona, 1977; Baraldi, 1977; Medusa, 1977; Pescarollo, 1979; Pescia, 1980; Vaciago, 1980; Valentini, 1982; Varesi 1983) a "crisis" view in relation to vocational training is dominant as in relation to other areas such as labour administration (Mazzoleni, 1978:44-47). The legislative initiatives (2) taken in connection with

youth unemployment in the 1970's which included training measures have been rated as a failure (Arrigo, 1982: 118; Garonna, 1986:45) and a missed opportunity (Faustini, 1984:239). While Bruno (1978:161) has argued that the Youth Unemployment Act (1977) was an attempt to import and adopt measures not adequate to the existing Italian institutional setting, Balandi (1978) has seen the Act as a further example of "assistenzialismo" (to help employers without promoting developments).

This chapter considers vocational training as a policy sector in Italy with reference to the "Provvedimenti per l'occupazione giovanile" (Youth Employment Act). (3) The chapter aims to (a) study the emergence of the youth unemployment issue; (b) investigate the impact of the Government response to training; (c) try to understand the gap between high expectations and little actual result from the 1977 Act in the area of vocational training.

It is argued here that a non-accomplished institutionalisation of training and the dispersion of training interests led to the subordination of training issues to others (deregulation of labour market, reform of a protective job placement system (4), administrative decentralisation). New perspectives for the training of young people were discussed among a large number of policy actors and had a symbolic political stance. A full implementation of anticipatory innovations included in the Youth Employment Act did not take place. Cultural, political and institutional factors weakened the attempt to make capital out of favourable political conditions.

This chapter is based on data collected for the purpose of this piece of research (5). It includes three sections. The first investigates the political origin of the youth employment plan, the second and the third focus

on the employment and training contracts included in the Act and on the lack of implementation (see Chapter Two:Sect.2.4). The third scrutinises the employment and training contracts. The fourth outlines some aspects of the training policy sector. The conclusion will summarise the main findings.

6.2 THE YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PLAN (1977-1980): ITS POLITICAL ORIGIN

This section will consider how youth unemployment came to be perceived and defined in the middle 1970's in Italy. The definition of the situation was a crucial ingredient of the political context in which the debate and action about youth unemployment took place. Subsequently, factors which put pressure upon the Government for action will be discussed. These three aspects - perception of the phenomena, political context and sources of pressure - will help in an understanding of the impressive speed of reaction by the Government in designing, discussing and having the 1977 Youth Employment Act passed in Parliament. At the same time, they will anticipate why the political impetus fell short of a full implementation of the decided measures.

It is argued here that, under the pressure of a policy community aggregated by a need for action, the Government activated a parliamentary process of decision (Di Palma, 1977) - steering a course within several major unresolved policy issues.

6.2.1 Youth Unemployment and its Political Visibility

Unemployment among young people with school qualifications has been considered endemic (Barbagli, 1974) to the Italian economy notwithstanding the persistence of full employment as a stated priority in successive political periods (Faustini, 1984). During the 1970's the number of young people not in education or training nor in employment was high (1970: 9.7% of the age group (15-24) compared with 5.6% in France, 2.9 % in the United Kingdom and 0.4% in the Federal Republic of Germany). In the course of the 1970's the youth unemployment rate has been well above the EC figures (in 1978 34% of the 16-17 age group and 51% of the 17-18 age group compared with the corresponding figures of 24% and 41% for the EC as a whole [European Centre, 1981a:3]).

(6)

Since the early 1970's unemployment among young people with school or university qualifications has been a topic for research and debate in Italy (Barbagli, 1974; Colasanti, Mebane and Bonolis, 1976). The outcomes of these investigations affected the current views on youth unemployment: they focused on the failure of the previous forecasts about shortages of graduates, pointed out a "parking" function of the school system and generally looked back to the past rather than tried to anticipate future developments. Little interest appeared to be shown by policy actors in the policy implications. Neither pressure for the short-term nor prompt action stemmed from these studies. The solutions were depicted in long-term and wide-ranging perspectives of broad social and economic policies (e.g. facing the underdevelopment of Southern Italy), or reform of the education system with particular reference to the upper secondary school (7) and of potential alternative scenarios (Colasanti, Mebane and Bonolis, 1976). (8)

In addition, national statistical data did not provide a full account of the employment situation. Unemployment data were provided by two sources (the national statistical service (ISTAT) and the Ministry of Employment): both were unreliable, particularly before 1977 (Bruno, 1978:31; Scotti, 1978:13). (9)

In the mid 1970's a few factors increased the political visibility and salience of youth unemployment (10). They were: first, a new wave of surveys and estimates intended to provide a closer view of the actual and varied situation of the young in relation to the labour market; second, although youth unemployment figures provided by various sources differed, they were certainly alarming; third, was a cultural and political debate about young people. Surveys carried out by CENSIS and ISFOL (1974) along with estimates put forward by CERES (Frey, 1976) had a considerable and unusual part in the political debate (ISFOL, 25, 1976:18ff) and also in the decision-making process. On the basis of these data, the picture of youth unemployment in Italy was presented in Parliament by the "rapporteur" of the Parliamentary Committee on Youth Employment in these words:

"The number of young unemployed people is difficult to identify. There is no proper census; current estimates indicate one million unemployed young people. According to the data supplied by the CERES one million and twenty thousand young people in the 14-24 age group are unemployed; the figure reaches one million and two hundred thousand for the 14-29 age group. In April 1975 a survey by ISTAT presents four hundred and sixteen thousand young people unemployed out of a total of six hundred and sixty-seven thousand unemployed. According to data from CENSIS in 1975 fifty-five per cent of first-job seekers are young people (i.e. about 450,000). The survey carried out by ISFOL and CENSIS indicates 620,000 young unemployed people in the 15-24 age group". (11)

The impact of these data was twofold: they provided updated quantitative information and, above all, they portrayed a less simplistic view of youth unemployment. Categories such as "inoccupazione" (young people not in education, not in training, not in employment and not seeking a job) and "sotto-occupazione" (temporary jobs, moonlighting, hidden jobs, part-time and casual jobs) were introduced. In particular the concept of "inoccupazione" was crucial and marked a shift from the traditional and established view of the unemployed (non voluntary, male, adult) to a view including all those people not in education or in employment. At the same time, the youth unemployment issue prompted a cultural debate about the youth. Two main topics became dominant: the attitude of young people towards working life and the status of manual work.

The gap between young people's expectations and actual career and job opportunities was the common denominator of discussions about the role of education, the backwardness of the school system and the expansion of the secondary and university system (12). The situation was mainly seen in terms of discrepancies in attitudes, motivations and technical preparation. As a consequence, the need for preparation for work was spelled out. The emphasis was on young people with school certificates. (13) This discussion overlapped contemporary debates and initiatives about the transition from school to work; this was a field with an increasing number of initiatives both from the education system and from other actors (14). There was a growing consensus about the idea of work experience and on-the-job training.

The call for a reconsideration of manual work (15) (Gorrieri, 1977) reflected the actual demand for skilled manual workers in some economic sectors (such as the engineering industry) where the demand was difficult to

meet and the level of "disoccupazione intellettuale" (16). Industrialists and employer-oriented research centres, philosophers and economists were mobilised in a campaign in favour of a reconsideration of manual work (17).

When the special recruitment lists of young unemployed people had been compiled, as was required by the 1977 Act (18), a quantitative framework was established and a social panic started. Years later the effects of the governmental action was seen in relation to a rising awareness of the problem. (19) It was a process of construction of concern about unemployment; a new policy area was opened up: the "inoccupazione" of the youth (Bruno, 1978:35).

6.2.2 An Area of Non-decision

Young people not at school nor in employment occupied a territory of non-decision from the point of view of the current policies. Before the 1977 Act on youth unemployment, existing unemployment insurance schemes only provided for jobseekers registered in the placement agencies who had worked for at least twelve months (Mazzoleni, 1978:157). Only a few young people could benefit from this arrangement.

Several factors had till then prevented an active manpower policy in Italy although the discussion about manpower services had large resonance (Bruno, 1978). The bureaucratic structure of the placement system (Mazzoleni, 1978), the "guarantist approach" (protective system of job placement), the rigidity of work legislation and the conflict system of industrial relations constrained attempts to take action in the area of manpower policy.

Paradoxically the high level of unemployment was matched by a high level of priority traditionally given to employment in policy presentation. All policies and measures proposed, discussed and adopted were easily vetted from the point of view of their contribution to the enlargement of employment. All solutions not aiming at this result were considered as palliatives and disqualified by trade unionists and left-wing politicians. (20)

Another contextual feature that impinged on the policy process was the extremely fragmented system of Government. (21) There were three other reforms in contiguous fields all of extreme relevance to youth employment. However, these reforms were carried out in a very independent way and were viewed quite differently by the various parties of the Government coalition. These reforms were: the reform of the upper secondary school, the preparation of a framework law on vocational training and the reform of the placement system. Action in favour of the young unemployed could not easily be taken, given this background. Cultural, political and administrative breakthroughs were necessary. In the second half of the 1970's the "non no-confidence"(22) Government found itself in a particularly favourable situation for taking initiative and for an immediate political response. (23)

6.2.3 Pressure, Consensual and Divisive Issues

In 1976-1977 a set of political contingencies led the coalition Government to draft the Youth Employment Act and Parliament to pass it. It was a rather unusual episode of prompt working in a usually slow-moving system. Some reasons for this can be identified. In the 1976 general election all the major political parties

committed themselves to deal with youth unemployment. The electoral manifestos summarised the internal debate and the search for proposals that had been conducted in the Spring 1976. The after-election Government negotiated and agreed an agenda within a large political spectrum and the "monocolore democristiano" (the minority Christian Democrat Government) was in charge of its implementation (Di Palma, 1979:411-412). Special actions in favour of the young were included and specific measures indicated. These actions were seen to be a result of pressure from left wing parties. The primary influence had been the Italian Communist Party (PCI) which had become a "reference point for all those groups demanding change" (Pasquino, 1983:101).

The youth issue (Balandi, 1978:16) was particularly sensitive for the PCI for two types of reasons. First, it became one of the issues for which the PCI had to demonstrate that its co-operative attitude was paying off. (24) Second, the increasing gap between the left-wing party and the youth was a source of great concern for party leaders and led to action for "a political and idealistic fight to educate and reconquer the youth" (from one of the current slogans). On "Rinascita", the PCI weekly magazine, a debate was launched about this growing gap between the youth and the left; this debate turned out to be a forum for experts and opinion leaders during the winter of 1976 and the early spring of 1977.

The rise of youth movements not totally attuned to the left-wing political culture and behaviour (see the "Indiani metropolitani" - a radical student movement opposing political parties and campaigning for alternative ways of living) also had some impact on trade unions. The main concern was about the political control

of the youth. Lama, a national trade union leader, pointed out the danger of the situation; he said:

"We risk giving these new masses to those that first come up with a plan for immediate action. There is the danger of a mass struggle outside or against the workers' movement and without links with the social and economic status of the young". (Rinascita, 18.6.1976 n.25:13)

An explosion of social unrest particularly in some cities in the Spring 1977 (Bologna, Rome, Naples) was viewed by politicians as a worsening of the conditions of the young. Another source of pressure on politicians was the setting up of organised groups of young unemployed people ("movimento dei disoccupati organizzati" - movement of organised unemployed people). These groups were gradually absorbed by the "Leghe dei disoccupati" (associations of unemployed people) promoted by the left-wing parties (PCI and PSI). These groups introduced a direct voice in the political arena and, after the 1976 election, also in Parliament as some of their national leaders became members of Parliament. Trade unions who had called for a plan for youth employment (25), sponsored the development of organised groups under a trade union umbrella; thus trying to avoid confrontation in favour of some sort of co-optation in the name of solidarity (See Chapter Seven:Sect.7.3.2, for a parallel situation in France).

At this stage of policy formation a particular role was played by the youth organisations of the various political parties. It was an unusual case, but leaders of these organisations worked together and had access to the policy-making process. They called for a national conference on youth employment, were consulted by the Minister of Employment and met trade union national representatives. (26)

6.2.4 The Coalition Government's Response

The type, the methods and the extent of the Government commitment may be seen as determined by its political setting. Pressed by international bodies (the International Monetary Fund and the EC) not to expand public expenditure and not to allow for pay increase, under pressure to take action (1976 had been a disaster year for the Italian economy; Furlong, 1982:181ff), the Government was urged to demonstrate effectiveness and, thus, consolidate the coalition. The Prime Minister at the time, Mr Andreotti, reacted in a very pragmatic way without abandoning the Government's long-standing policy style in accommodating several interests.

The Government did not formulate a long-term and broad policy, but set to face 'cyclical aspects', carefully avoiding more far-reaching reforms. It favoured a process of consultation and selection of feasible and short-term solutions, that could be acceptable to the large political spectrum supporting the coalition. (27)

In this process a major role was played by the Parliamentary Committees.(28) The Employment Committee was asked to analyse the four proposals of action for youth employment put forward by political parties; it delegated the task to a sub-committee and asked a smaller group to compile the final unified version of the Act to be approved by Parliament. (29) Policy-making, at this stage, consisted of blending the different requests and proposals, trying to compromise the various interests without openly opposing them, mediating more than ruling and putting aside more controversial proposals. (30)

In the Spring of 1977, on the request of the youth organisations, a national conference on youth employment

was sponsored by the Government: economists, experts, politicians and representatives of several interests gathered and debated the topics (ISFOL, 1977, n.37). It was a three-day conference in which the policy community gathered. (31)

The Youth Employment Act was passed on 1 June 1977 with the support of all the coalition parties with the exception of the Republic Party. While summarising the result of the work done by the Government, the Prime Minister said:

"This is the best we may achieve with existing and available means in order to limit unemployment." (Corriere della Sera, 6.1.1983:11)

This realistic approach from the Government was consistently held to throughout the years under consideration. In 1983 Mr Scotti, Minister for Employment, had no problem in accepting that:

"The Youth Employment Act has been a failure from several points of view. The private sector could have supported the initiative, but it did not, as it could..." (Corriere della Sera 6.1.1983:11)

Wide consultation and a broad consensus were, for the Government, substitutes for a more direct and responsible action.

The broad consensus and the strong political demand led to an unprecedented speed in the legislative process and the Parliamentary work was carried out under an exceptional feeling of urgency. (32) The Minister of Employment confirmed in Parliament that the initiative had been discussed with EC representatives. (33)

The content of the Act was a patchwork and an example of what Di Palma terms "multi-purpose legislation"

(1979:411): the Act included pieces from different fabrics. (34) Wide solutions such as the drawing of a regional plan for vocational training, were joined to specific ones (public utility jobs); employment-centred measures (subsidies to employers for the employment of young people; setting up of co-operative production units) (35) were put alongside training-centred measures. By eroding the edge of more controversial proposals (e.g. employment in the public sector), by reducing the overall perspective (the PCI proposals to abolish the apprenticeship system and to generalise the employment and training contract), by avoiding the linking of action to long-term reforms that were under discussion (36), and by accepting almost all the proposals, the Government avoided acute and divisive decisions and strengthened the coalition.

Some authors have attempted to depict this situation. Amato (1976:170) notes that in the Italian society:

"Interest groups put forward their demands and their political representatives will mainly work in order to provide the expected answers through institutional channels". (1976:170)

Such situations lead to the existence of various sources of power, but prevents hegemony; it is power without hegemony. Di Palma calls this approach "negoziatazione legislativa" (legislation through negotiation) (Di Palma, 1979:411). As a consequence it is very difficult, if not impossible, to identify the the real origin of the Governmental proposals (Di Palma, 1979:408). Very controversial issues such as public versus private training, decentralised versus centralised patterns, were dealt with in Parliament as more general political issues and not only in their connection with training.

The political momentum did not last long. The 1977 Act, one of the many Italian "leggi manifesto" (pieces of legislation with high-level statements about principles, but weak in terms of feasibility and implementation), had been the policy outcome of a peculiar political environment. Salvati says that:

"the period from the end of 1976 to the beginning of 1979 saw one of the most stable governmental formations of the whole decade."
(1970:44)

Furlong views the 1973-1979 period as one of "unusual harmony and co-ordination between the warring groups in Italian politics" (1982:182). The Government action was, however, destined to end. As soon as the unprecedented political pressure slowed down and the "great coalition" broke up, youth unemployment lost its place on the Government's agenda as a priority.

Some of the issues, however, survived, although in a different policy setting. An attempt to have a bill passed (37) on the employment and training contract was made, but political impetus failed to materialise in the remarkable and strenuous form as it had in 1976-1977. The 1983 and 1984 tripartite agreements between employers, trade unions and the Government included provision for the training of young people. (38)

In the second half of the 1970's the impetus concentrated on the formulation of the special measures; the implementation had to rely on a set of actors (regional governments, employers, trade unions). Mr Cristofori, undersecretary for Employment stated this clearly intervening in a debate:

"Neither the Government nor Parliament had thought that it was possible to solve the employment problem with such an Act... We have defined and established an Act that...as you may

have realised, call upon trade unions, employers and local Authorities to tackle the problem". (Regione Lombardia, 1978:68)

Political leaders had no difficulty in recognising the failure of the action undertaken, pointing out, as explanatory factors, the non co-operation of employers or the inefficiency of the Regional Departments.

6.3 POLICY-MAKING AND IMPLEMENTATION DEFICIT

After having presented the strong political impetus behind the making of the 1977 Youth Employment Act this section will investigate the set of interests in the policy process. The active role played by groups and experts in the phase of proposals-forging will be singled out and their impact on the implementation will be considered. The challenge of new ideas in face of divisive issues was enmeshed with the behaviour of several groups.

6.3.1 The Search for Solutions

Measures included in the 1977 Act did not come from the available arsenal of policy instruments as they concerned a relatively new area of action (Sect.6.2.3).(39) They did not stem from an explicit macro-economic policy although they were heavily affected by the Government's economic policy; they were part of the attempt by the Government to react to economic and political constraints.

In the first place, the core of the policy-making was channelling therapies put forward by inside and outside

groups (ISFOL, 1976) and harmonising them. A few economists were on the front line in this process. By considering that an increased trend in employment was unlikely and by looking at similar experiences in the United States, Andreatta, economic adviser to the Prime Minister Moro in 1975, opened the debate and launched the idea of a plan of job creation. (40) This plan included new temporary jobs in special public projects for 500,000 young people. Frey, an economist close to the trade unions and listened to by the Government, drew an ambitious employment plan (Frey, 1976) "Piano del lavoro", based on selective investment in some areas. Others (SRIL, 1976) pointed out some basic factors limiting the action in the labour market. Practical suggestions came from employers' associations and trade unions. The FEDERMECCANICA (the federation of the engineering industry) called for a relaxation of the rules governing labour, in particular calling for part-time and temporary employment contracts. The Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici (federation of workers in the engineering industry) (41) and the Associazione delle Cooperative presented their own proposals. The Communist youth organisation (FGCI) made clear what was needed to increase employment: their plan was based on links between vocational training and regional development plans (42).

These trends advanced and were particularly marked in the Spring of 1976 while political parties simultaneously drew their own recipe out of the debate. Regional Governments, less inclined to enter national debates, started planning and operating special programmes in favour of young unemployed people. Research bodies such as CENSIS, ISRIL and ISVET in various forms enriched the debate: these included comparative studies (ISFOL, n.40 1977; Ventrella, Fadda, Tatafiore and Tozzi, 1981; Arrigo, 1982:111) (43), and discussion papers (44). In

1977 ISFOL (45) launched a special project on youth unemployment and elaborated specific proposals on the request of the Ministero del Bilancio e della Programmazione Economica (Ministry of National Economic Planning)(ISFOL, 1976). The debate took place in the media and in specialised journals; it conveyed information and disseminated knowledge about foreign experiences.

The final version of the 1977 Act did not take into account almost all the discussed proposals - focusing on their pragmatic, feasible and emergency aspects. Calls for alternative economic policies or for broader changes such as a reform of the apprenticeship system, did not end in visible results. The need for practical and politically plausible measures was the common denominator and the pressure behind these was the factor facilitating their inclusion in the Act. There were signs of co-operation. (46)

The measures were negotiated among influential groups; they did not overcome traditional attitudes in the area of industrial relations. However, a feeling of "new wine" spread widely along with a utopian flavour; few looked at the old bottles at that moment. The proposals put forward by the political parties basically included three kind of measures: subsidies for youth employment, temporary jobs in the public sector ("servizi socialmente utili": community projects) and training measures. The last measures were, undoubtedly, the least controversial (Balandi, 1978:22).

Fig.6.1 Proposals by political parties and Government (47)

1. "Preavviamento al lavoro dei giovani inoccupati" (29 July 1976) Proposal n. 84 submitted by the Italian Communist Party.

This proposal included job creation (temporary jobs in social services) and training courses for the 18-24 age group, for one year.

2. "Provvedimenti a favore dei giovani inoccupati" (1 October 1976) Proposal n.203 submitted by the Italian Socialist Party.

These proposals included job creation (social services), special grants for training courses leading to a vocational qualifications, and the setting up of co-operative units for the 18-28 age group, for one year.

3. "Provvedimenti straordinari per i giovani non occupati" (16 November 1976) Proposal n.309 submitted by the Government.

This proposal included employment and training contracts, part-time employment, employment subsidies, and a quota of employment in the public sector reserved for the young (25). The target group was the 15-28 age group. In addition was regional planning of training activities.

4. "Disciplina del rapporto di lavoro e formazione" (20 December 1976) Proposal n.408 submitted by the Italian Communist Party.

This proposal included employment and training contracts and abolished the apprenticeship contract.

The scope of the discussion must be seen as a compromise among proposals; little attention was devoted to research (Bruno in Formez, 1981:7).(48)

6.3.2 Interests and Lobbies

When the youth unemployment issue arose, the regionalisation of the vocational training system (Ridley, 1979:172-176; Cassese, 1980:233) was not yet fully accomplished and the 1977 Act became largely enmeshed with the decentralisation issue. The regional lobby mainly included the Communist Party which a forceful influence in the political arena. In the area of vocational training, decentralisation (49) was intended to mark a shift from a "laissez-faire" situation to a

"planning approach". Any attempt to set up centralised bodies and to assign specialised functions to already existing central bodies, was strongly opposed (50). The weakness of Ministry of Employment or the unsuitability of ISFOL as an executive agency corroborated the regional approach. Attention had to be paid to some constitutional difficulties about the uneasy discrimination between central and regional competences; the former included labour administration, the latter, vocational training. The experience of some Regional Departments (51) which launched pilot schemes for youth employment, were in favour of supporters of a regional approach.

There were, however, large political issues at stakes and from the parliamentary documents (52) there is no evidence that a different option would have been acceptable. The Regional Governments were, therefore, asked by the Act to develop vocational training plans according to their regional development perspective. Although an attempt was made by some groups and some representatives of the Government to consider training in firms (i.e. to give more autonomy to the employers in organising training) the control upon training activities remained in Regional hands (Balandi, 1978:99-104). In practical terms, there were constraints on regional bodies which derived from unclear policies in areas such as placement and vocational training and from their internal administrative arrangements. The 1977 Act fostered a rich legislative action by the Regional Governments. (53)

The administrative setting of the action was not, however, as clear cut in so far as the central-regional dimension was concerned. The role which the Ministry of Employment was asked to play particularly concerned the setting up and the managing of special lists of the young unemployed (Mazzoleni, 1978:46; Bruche and Kroker, 1982).

The main focus of this role was the managing of such lists rather than the planning and the implementing of special measures. Cassese summarises this situation in these words:

"The Acts on employment (Youth Employment Act, Industrial Restructuring Act...) led the Ministry of Employment to acquire new and important functions in the area of the Government's economic policy. Before its main role concerned the negotiation between social partners". (1980:57)

The officials of the Ministry of Employment lacked experience in managing training and were more active and efficient in the process of collective negotiations.

Although the debate was large and prominent in the trade unions periodicals (54), trade unions, as a whole, did not played a crucial role in the preparatory phase of the 1977 Act (Bruno, 1978:18). The Federazione Lavoratori Metalmeccanici (Federation of Workers in the Engineering Industry) proposals was the main initiative (Bruno, 1978:91-92). Trade unionists strongly objected to any attempt to isolate the youth unemployment issue from the general employment problem. Moreover, any avenue leading to part-time or temporary employment as well as any attack on the 'guarantist' philosophy embedded in the current placement system (Mazzoleni, 1978:57) could not readily be accepted, in accordance with to the traditional attitude of trade unions towards employment. In fact as Giugni summarises:

"Trade Unions have always opposed actions not leading, as a direct consequence, to employment (they are called "assistenziali"). As far as the Youth Employment Act is concerned, trade unions have stated that any measure that would be adopted, has to lead to employment". (Giugni quoted in Bruno, 1978:106-7)

There are other reasons for the attitude of trade unions. Generally speaking trade unions were at that time undergoing a change (Cella, 1979); their role as representatives of general interests was decreasing; and a co-operative attitude (maintaining a line of moderation and self-control), exemplified in the 1975 agreement concerning the inflation-linked wage system, has been seen as a far-reaching change (Furlong, 1978; Salvati, 1979:43).

Trade unions appear to have failed to participate directly in the setting up of special measures although they were regularly consulted by the Government. Cella maintains that this happened because they were increasingly subdued by the political parties (1979:286). As a consequence the role of trade unions in the implementation of the measures is, according to the content of the Act, marginal and modest (Balandi, 1978:21); it mainly included their participation in the Regional Committees dealing with the employment of young people. The role of trade unions, then, appears marginal, especially when compared with their increased responsibility in the manpower area. (55)

The trade unions' position changed at the end of the Summer of 1977. (56) At this point the main political impetus was in decline and the difficulties of putting into practice the measures of the 1977 Act were endangering the youth plan. The trade unions then decided to take an active part in the implementation of the youth measures. A leading trade unionist stated in a conference:

"The task we have to face today is to tackle the limits of the Act and to overcome them, by playing an active role in the implementation of the measures included in the Act..."
(Crea, 1977:4)

The implementation of the 1977 Act thus became involved in the area of industrial relations and collective negotiations (Arrigo, Cascioli et al., 1982). Trade unions which had successfully managed to guarantee employed people against the threat of unemployment (57) put their force behind the call for youth jobs. Trade unions became available for a joint effort with the Government for the implementation of the Youth Employment Act. This position was the main theme of a national conference called by the three main trade unions (CISL, CGIL and UIL) in October 1977. The rescue of the 1977 Act became the wide spread aim of trade union actions. This is reflected in expressions such as "collective negotiations rescue the Act 285"; the concern was with the need to safeguard "the innovative content of the Youth Employment Act" (58). In a few cases special agreements led to substantial action by employers; this happened, mainly in the nationalised sector of the economy. The state-owned company ENI and trade unions signed a common plan in which the company undertook to employ 1,000 young people in the following three years (1978-1980). (59)

The attitudes of employers had been quite clear since the beginning, although they may not have appeared to be uniform. Interest in the Government's intention of action was shown by those sectors, such as the engineering industry, where a shortage of skilled manual workers was more evident. In this sector a search for a way of training manpower was under way; the old system was not in operation and it was difficult to employ young people (Bruno, 1978:88-91). Small and medium industries could not afford their own training system as could larger companies.

A part from that sector where there was an increasing need for training, the main issues for employers in

general were the constraints deriving from labour legislation and administration. The employers claimed that the protective system of employment placement made it difficult to recruit young people. In particular the "numerical request" (employers were not allowed to select people for jobs not requiring a secondary school or university qualification) and the "temporary employment contract" (not allowed by collective negotiations) were at the core of the discussion. The direct reduction of labour costs (such as the incentives provided for by the Youth Employment Act) did not appear particularly attractive and appealing (Balandi, 1978:19). (60)

In general, little support was provided by employers for the implementation of the Act; criticisms were voiced against the Government action and doubt expressed about the efficacy of financial incentives. Due to their ability to circumvent the rigid rules of the placement system (61) they continued to use this system rather than the new, unknown and uncertain system introduced by the Act. Some success was obtained where tripartite forums were set up and promoted and where training was in need.

Political reasons moved some employers, mainly large nationalised companies, to become involved in experimenting with training contracts.

Although benevolent about the Government policy, the CONFINDUSTRIA, the association of employers, did not hide its critical position. Savona, its vice-president, reckoned that the only way out of the employment difficulties for young people was a move towards more flexibility in labour legislation (62). Evidence of this were provided in following years when a small step in the "deregulation" direction prompted more than 150,000 employment and training contracts in 12 months against

22,000 training contracts in the three years of the Act (63).

Many studies have outlined the inefficiency of policy-making in Italy. By way of contrast, the 1977 Act bears testimony to an unusual political impetus; in particular to the prominent role of Parliament and of Parliamentary Committees.

6.4 SYMBOLIC SALIENCE

The strong driving force behind the 1977 Act was, as has been seen, political. Due to the main political impetus the content of the Act had to satisfy political interests. One aspect of the Youth Act is that the measures taken cannot be seen only as technical solutions, to be assessed as means to an end. They present a broader meaning. Measures concerning the setting up of co-operative units were not defined according to the recommendation of a technical report, but were based on the ideological appeal of the co-operation. The same happened with the employment and training contracts.

The employment and training contracts ("contratti di formazione e lavoro") and, subsequently, the "stages" were included in the 1977 Act (art.7;9) and in the 1978 Act (art.16 bis of Act.n.479) as measures for coping with youth unemployment. The employment and training contract was one of the three types of recruitment contract included in the Youth Act (the others were the temporary employment contract and the special employment with subsidies). The employment and training contract was

basically a part-time contract designed for young people (15-22; 15-24 in the case of women and undergraduates and to 26 for graduates) which provided for half time in work and half time in training (20 hours weekly). Employers were granted a reduction in their obligatory social charges. After the 12 month period of the contract, the employer could recruit to full-time status these young people receiving, in such cases, a monthly premium for the first year. Training had to be organised or authorised by the Regional Governments. The employment and training contracts were largely supported and unopposed (see PSI and PCI proposals; ISFOL, 1976). They were also enthusiastically welcomed on the media (64). Experts considered them to be the only non-contingent measure (Balandi, 1978:10; Pescia, 1980) and as first step in a long-term change (CISL, 1977). Employers (CONFINDUSTRIA, 1977), trade unionists belonging to the three main organisations (Crea, 1977:12) (65) (66), responsible for training institutions (Medusa, 1977) (67) and ministry officials (Faustini, 1984) praised the contracts. An employers' official document states:

"Employment and training contracts do represent an important means for linking labour demand and supply." (68)

Mr Crea, a CISL trade unionist, with national responsibility said:

"We see the Employment and Training Contract as a solution whose value goes beyond the temporary and contingent nature of the Youth Employment Act". (1977:12)

The experts of ISFOL wrote in 1978:

"Undoubtedly, the employment and training contract is a big innovation. In the draft of the agreement among political parties about a new Act concerning vocational training, it is assumed that the employment and training contracts will be included in the work

regulations. If this happens, an intensive and wide use of the contracts will be the only alternative to the existing gap between the school and the world of work". (ISFOL, 48-49:1978:21

The employment and training contract was also considered as an alternative to the apprenticeship contract; the former provided for a larger age group and was not restricted to small companies, as was the apprenticeship contract. In the proposals presented by the Communist Party the apprenticeship contract was supposed to be abolished.

The enthusiastic welcome given to the employment and training contract, was not corroborated by the facts. In the three years of the Act only 8,028 contracts were signed (ten per cent of those involved in the Government plan; see Tab.6.2).

Tab. 6.2 Youth Employment Measures (1977-1980)

Private Sector		Public Sector	Total
T.E.	E.T.C		
12,567	8,028	60,248	80,843
T.E.: Temporary Employment; E.T.C.: Employment and Training Contract.			

Source: Relazione Generale sulla Situazione Sociale del Paese, Vol.III Rome, 1981.

The scope of the "failure" as the limited results were termed, appears bigger when the number of training contracts are compared with the number of people in apprenticeship (69) and the number of people who entered employment via the existing placement system. This failure, however apparent it seems on closer scrutiny,

(Balandi, 1978) did not undermine the overall consensus about training contracts as a satisfactory solution for youth training.

Reasons for the paucity of the results have been pointed out in political debate and in some research (70) In this section it is argued that the employment and training contracts were a real breakthrough in the Italian training arrangements as the part-time and temporary contracts were in the field of labour legislation. Therefore the implementation was uneasy. In addition, some of the proposals appeared unenforceable because no effort had been made to verify their feasibility. The employment and training contracts were not seen as measures to be experimented with and no plan was devised in order to monitor their implementation. Under the realistic and pragmatic approach of the Government there was a problem of accommodating various principles regarding broader issues. Another problem was the inadequacy of a conjunctural measure for long-term questions. As Balandi pointed out:

"The crisis in vocational training and employment exchanges sectors calls for global actions instead of a series of attempts to fill in gaps in a falling building". (Balandi, 1978:12)

Other aspects have been pointed out (ISFOL, 1980; 1984:29; Arrigo, 1982:117) with regards to the limitations of the Youth Employment Act.

Despite the fact that the employment and training contract was widely accepted in principle, there were no antecedents for such a contract. Some authors (Bruno, 1978; ISFOL, 69, 1980:19) have claimed that the employment and training contract was included on the basis of similar solutions being adopted in France. From this point of view the employment and training contracts

were well attuned to the contemporary understanding of training and educational affairs. In our view the implementation was almost nil because of two specific reasons: first was the dispersion of training interests without a common focus and second was the lack of institutionalised structures facilitating the accommodation of different interests. In a programme which linked training and work the accommodation of various interests is a crucial process. These factors accounted for the difficulties in setting up employment and training contracts.(71)

It is necessary to investigate further the gap between the large consensus expressed by the political parties, national representatives of employers and trade unions and other interests and the number of employment and training contracts signed. The role of experts must be considered in order to explain why a solution which seemed likely to be difficult to implement in Italy came to be included in the youth employment proposals. Subsequently it will be pointed out that the actors involved in the implementation process had a sectoral interest in training (trade unions and employers) or they lacked the necessary managerial skills for dealing with the organisation and the provision of training (Regional Departments).

(a) The Experts

Experts played a crucial role in connection with the employment and training contracts. By experts are meant people (some of whom were academics) conducting research into the related topics, working with research bodies (public and private), co-operating with the Ministry of Employment or its agencies and assiduous participants to the EC or European Centre meetings. Research centres like ISFOL, CENSIS, FORMEZ, ISVET, ISRIL, and CERES which were all involved in this field, constituted a kind of

"invisible college" committed to research, studies and technical support.

This intelligentsia was well aware that the Italian training system was not doing very well and that it was unmodernised compared with the other systems in the European Community. (72) Experts were faced with a traditional and poorly designed training system in Italy. At the same time they had absorbed a European perspective (Vaciago, 1980; Pescia, 1980) and had kept their understanding of training matters in line with the international debate and with current developments in other countries (Bruno, 1978:11). This situation meant that the development of symbolic policies as a way out of very frustrating circumstances (73) was likely.

The measures which had been taken or which were under discussion in other countries in the area of youth unemployment were well known in Italy before the 1977 Act was passed. In broader terms, the perspective of a link between work and training had been discussed among educationists since the early 1970's and this perspective was widely accepted as a policy guideline crossing various policy fields (vocational training, secondary schools).

As far as the policy system is concerned the experts were scattered; some were linked to political parties, some were attached to independent bodies. ISFOL, the public agency attached to the Ministry of Employment had a consultative role and provided politicians with up-dated information about developments in other countries (ISFOL, 1976, n.25:10; 1977; 1978; 1984,n.1); ISFOL was less entangled in controversial issues such as public versus private system and more interested in other general issues (training and the school, active manpower policy) (ISFOL, 1977:9). In his foreword to the Annual

Plan, Mr Saba, chairman of the ISFOL, wrote in 1977 that the Institute needed to:

"move from problems concerning the institutional framework such as the false public-private dilemma towards problems of a strategic nature such as the links between vocational training and the secondary school, planning of training provision and the relationship between vocational training and employment policies." (1977:9)

The experts created the ground for an agreement about the measures to be taken. More specifically the process of legislation opened up their access to policy-making and some among them took the opportunity of calling for broader change. While discussing the action to be taken for tackling youth unemployment, Mr Saba, chairman of ISFOL, stressed that it was necessary:

"to experiment with solutions that will prove to be useful in the long-term". (Saba, 1977)

More explicitly, Medusa, Director of ISFOL, said that action must be developed:

"in order to use the employment and training contracts as an opportunity for the innovation and the renewal of vocational training". (ISFOL, 1977:33)

In his analysis of the Italian system of training and education, Pagnoncelli recognises that the employment and training contract:

"is a training hypothesis that could be further developed notwithstanding its temporary and contingent setting...an operative proposal, alternative to the inadequate and old-fashioned apprenticeship system". (1979:200-201)

The experts contributed by putting any emergency change into perspective and by making clear the long-term salience of temporary measures.

Two sources limiting the experts' impact can be identified: the advisory role played by most of these experts and the variety of their professional backgrounds. Dispersed and without homogeneity, the experts had little direct power: they acted as advisers to different bodies rather than being responsible with executive functions (there was no executive body at the national level). As far as the professional background of experts is concerned, the debate about training matters was dominated by economists whose main interest was in analysing labour costs. Some of them tended to consider the Government's action as a measure dealing with social dissent more than with unemployment.

Another group of experts who were involved in the debate were the legal experts who were also well represented in the Ministry of Employment. Many studies were carried out concerning the legal aspects of training contracts. Both these groups, economists and legal experts, were backed by a solid academic tradition and research work. Training problems tended to be framed in these contexts; few opportunities were left to other experts. Paradoxically, this led to dissatisfaction among some practitioners who criticised the Youth Employment Act with particular reference to the employment and training contracts. (74)

(b) Employers and Trade Unions

The trade unions' U-turn in September 1977 brought new force to the employment and training contracts. They became less a matter of public policy and more a matter for collective negotiation. A substantial increase in the number of signed contracts was obtained. It is argued

here, however, that while the trade unions put the youth employment on the negotiating table (Cella, 1979) the training aspects were not the crucial issues for the unions. Trade unions were mainly interested in employment; training never became a dominant issue. As a consequence the union's traditional position of opposing any form of participation with employers in the field of labour administration did not disappear and sometimes it was reinforced. The trade unions were generally in favour of the public control of training. The issue at stake for them was mainly the "guarantist philosophy".(75)

Employers did not praise the 1977 Act despite the fact that some of its contents were openly in line with their aims. (76) Traditionally used to relying upon the Government for training, employers appear to have only minimally considered the training side. Their main attention was for any legislative innovation which could modify the labour administration system (in particular the "numerical request") (77). Employers called unsuccessfully for training to be organised in firms and to be paid for by the Government. When training needs were well recognised employment and training contracts could easily be signed. In other cases the link between work and school was already a pursued policy and, therefore, the contracts were not innovative. Trade unionist pressure and political pressure facilitated the development of employment and training contracts in some state-owned companies.

Generally speaking, it is not possible to consider employers and trade unions as promoters of change in the training area. Their interest was marginal and their aims were only indirectly linked with training. It is worthwhile noting that while the employment and training contracts appear to have been difficult to implement, the apprenticeship system was undergoing significant changes

and was becoming a major way of entering work in the small business sector (Ministero del lavoro, 1979). Moreover, most of the people at work (under 20) were in apprenticeships (Ministero del Lavoro, 1980:199).(78)

(c) Regional Departments

The role played by Regional Departments bears testimony to the links between training and several other policy issues. The Regional Governments, set up during the 1970's, had to cope with unrealistic demands. (79) Most of them could not satisfy the requirements of the Youth Employment Act, particularly the planning of training activities. Gradually, however, these Governments included in their activities a specific sector (training for young unemployed people) which was marginal in some cases (mainly in the North), and dominant in others (mainly in the South). More recent developments, however, indicate that the role and the position of regional bodies appears to have been modified. Neither the 1983 Act (n.79), nor the 1984 Act (n.863) were warmly welcomed by all Regional Departments. Almost total autonomy was given to employers for the setting up of the training programmes. This remit clashes with the institutional competence of the Regional Governments.

6.5 VOCATIONAL TRAINING AS A POLICY SECTOR

The case of employment and training contracts has indicated the problems which have to be tackled in vocational training policy-making. In Italy there was not an explicit and persistent vocational training policy pursued by the Government. In this section some characteristics of vocational training as a policy sector will be pointed out. The characteristics are formulated

with reference to the previous sections and to the general propositions discussed in Chapter Two.

First of all, vocational training is not incorporated in a strong policy framework, such as a manpower policy. The fragmented approach of official authorities regarding employment problems (Mazzoleni, 1978:50) did not provide an appropriate framework for training. As has been seen, other very controversial issues concerning the decentralisation process and the labour legislation and led to the entangling of training issues in controversial non training policy issues. In the context of these issues, training may appear as something useful - as an obvious ingredient. This view of training is presented by a leading expert in these words:

"Training is always positive, it is not dangerous, it is a matter for exchange ..[From the point of view of trade unions] if we make concessions as far as regulations are concerned...we ask, in exchange, for training..." (ISFOL, 1984a:185)

Second, the case of employment and training contracts bears testimony to the uneasy harmony between training as a matter for collective negotiations and training as matter for political decisions. The decision taken in the Youth Employment Act did not prove to be adequate for the commitment of social partners; on the other hand the 1983 and 1984 collective agreements led the Government to accept the positions of social partners. Moreover, bilateral negotiations had far more influence than had consultative machineries, such as CNEL (Hine, 1979:199).

Third, training interests did not coagulate in institutional forms or in some kind of institutional commitment and executive body. (80) ISFOL was and still is a research agency without any executive function. Such a commitment would have had to involve as a necessary

ingredient a tripartite forum and a process of accommodation of partial interests in a programme rationale. Bruno has pointed out the lack of "cultura negoziale" in Italy, i.e. the managerial skills for negotiating the provision and the organisation of training between trade unions, employers and public authorities. (81)

Fourth, the discrepancies between the centre and the periphery affected the policy process. One of the main sources of difficulty was the fact that while vocational training was decentralised, the regulations about the placement system and work legislation were defined at the national level. The decentralisation of the organisation of the training provision (Amato, 1980:143) was politically indisputable in the second half of the 1970's and no room was left for a functional differentiation (the approach used in the 1950's and in the 1960's when administrative units fulfilling new functions, e.g. the Development Agency for Southern Italy were devised and build up).

Fifth, the experts animated the debate and kept it in line with international evolutions and foreign experiences. Bruno (1878:17) notes that there has been traditionally a tendency in official analyses of manpower problems, to use the conceptual schemes available at the international level. The experts, however, could do little to put these into operation; they were advisers to a policy system tied in a number of ways. This increased the distance between the debate and the real processes.

All these factors show that the coagulation of training interests was partial and not up to the challenge of the unemployment problem. However, these characteristics explain why the outcome of the Youth Employment Act were so modest. In spite of a convergence

of interests as discussed in Chapter Two, vocational training is a complex policy sector and actions require mechanisms in order to accommodate a plurality of interests and need managerial skills in order to set up and carry out programmes. Both these requirements cannot be imported as they are rooted in the way a society is governed, how institutions relate to each other and how the administrative structure works. The success of employment and training contracts, reintroduced in the 1983 Act (n.79) was based on deregulative aspects and on the autonomy left to firms in organising training (with stress on work experience instead of intensive training; see ISFOL, 1984a:14.

6.6 CONCLUSION

This Chapter has dealt with the response of the Government to youth unemployment in Italy. Training measures (employment and training contracts and work experience) were one of the components of the Youth Unemployment Plan. It has been pointed out that political pressure and political mobilisation were crucial factors in explaining such a response (Sect.6.2). These factors led to a favourable situation for a consensual accommodation of various proposals submitted by political parties and other policy actors. An innovative perspective for youth training, stemming from diffuse current interpretations, was discussed and incorporated into the 1977 Act (Sect.6.3). The Government's action on the youth unemployment issue was kept separate from other reforms which were under discussion in Parliament at the time (upper secondary schools, labour exchange, vocational training) despite the fact that many of those areas overlapped. The stress on mediation between various

policy actors indicated the lack of a specific Government policy (apart from the search for the consensus needed for the coalition). At the same time, this mediation deprived the Government of the political relevance of the actual implementation of the measures adopted. In addition the political impetus was not matched by an executive impetus (Sect.6.4).

The account provided in this Chapter sheds light on a policy process that has been viewed in term of policy failure, a lack of agreement between social partners and a lack of a substantial governmental policy (Sect.1.1). Our data confirm these views: the employment and training contracts constitute a case of legislation without implementation (see Chapter Two:Sect.2.4). However, the fact that the perspective of a combination of training and employment for the young was widely accepted, entered the political agenda and became part of a Government programme, enriched the list of available options in the sector of vocational training.

NOTES

(1) The system of vocational training in Italy ("formazione professionale") concerns vocational training outside the school system. Pescarollo (1979:9) lists the following types of activities: two-three year training course leading to recognised qualifications for young school leavers; re-training and further training for workers, training for the unemployed, employment and training contracts, apprenticeship. A CENSIS report (1982:163) provided the following quantitative data. The total number of people undergoing training (excluding young people in apprenticeship) was 201,295 in 1978-79; 234,550 in 1979-80; 250,591 in 1980-81. In 1981 training activities were organised in 1,650 training centres. The number of apprentices was 678,510 in 1977 and 690,276 in 1978. The system is funded by the Government (European Centre, 1980a; Pescarollo, 1979; ISFOL, 1981) with an annual budget of LIT 971 miliardi (data for 1980: ISFOL, 1982:12). The legal framework is provided by Act 845 (21 December 1978) "Legge quadro sulla formazione professionale" (Framework legislation on vocational training) and by the Regional Acts.

(2) We include the Act 285 (1 June 1977) "Provvedimenti per l'occupazione giovanile" (Youth Employment Act) and the subsequent modifications (Law Decree 341 (6 July 1978) and Act 479 (4 August 1978)).

(3) The Youth Employment Act (1977) is a complex piece of legislation and is not analysed in all its aspects. We shall refer to its origin (Sect.6.2), to the measures included (Sect.6.3) with particular reference to the employment and training contracts (Sect.6.4).

(4) According to the 264 Act (29 April 1949) job placement is a public function; private mediation between employers and workers is formally prohibited. Several pieces of legislation have followed the protective function of the public placement system which has been retained by the pressure and political power of trade unions. Mazzoleni asserts that two independent labour administrations exist: "a formal apparatus, delivering legally defined services and a system of informal practices and customs" (1978:1-2). The formal system is labelled by the same author "guarantist" (1978:4).

(5) See Appendix One for the sources used and Appendix Two for the questionnaires compiled for the fieldwork.

(6) National data quoted here are from Chapter Four: Sect.4.4; comparative data are from European Centre, 1981a:3.

(7) See Von Blumenthal (1977) for an overview of the several unsuccessful attempts at reforming the upper secondary school.

(8) Colasanti, Mebane and Bonolis (1976) carried out a simulative exercise identifying alternative scenarios on the basis of differing options in the number of people in schools or in employment. See also the related debate in *Corriere della sera*, 5 Mars 1977:3.

(9) See Bruno (1978) for the subjectivist elements in the collection and interpretation of statistical data about unemployment in Italy.

(10) At the time a few reports depicted the gap between what was called "il paese reale" and "il paese legale". In particular the yearly reports by CENSIS on the social situation at the national level unveiled a supposedly more accurate picture of attitudes and behaviour. See the theme such as "occupazione sommersa" (hidden employment).

(11) Senato della Repubblica, Rapporto della XI Commissione. VII Legislatura, 26 January 1977:38.

(12) See ISFOL (1977d) for a report on youth attitudes and motivations towards work. Similar topics were under scrutiny at the European level (see European Centre, 1978).

(13) See ISFOL, 1974a. This report illustrates the view that vocational training should be conceived not as an opportunity for a special group of the young, but as an interface between education (school and university) and work.

(14) With the support of the European Social Fund, ISFOL launched in 1974 a large scale project in Southern Italy aiming at reorganising the basic vocational training courses on the bases of a four-module system; one of the modules was devoted to work experience in a firm (ISFOL, 1974b). See also Bovone (1980) for an overview of several experiences concerning the link between school and work.

(15) An interviewee pointed out that this was a remarkable change; for many years apprenticeship was dismissed and regarded as an old-fashioned solution to the training of the young.

(16) See Barbagli (1974) for an historical account of unemployment among young people with school certificates or university degrees. Among the young people included in

the official youth unemployment recruitment list (see the note n.18), 62.36% held a secondary school diploma and 5.27% a University degree (ISFOL, 1984b:26).

(17) The debate was introduced by a report by Fondazione Agnelli and CENSIS. The report proposals included the introduction of "salario minimo garantito" instead of the "cassa integrazione guadagni" (CIG) and the setting up of an Employment Agency (See Il Sole 24 ore, 25.3.1977:3).

(18) According to the Youth Unemployment Act (1977) all unemployed young people could register on special lists; employers wishing to employ young people had to submit a numerical request (no request by name was allowed). The number of people on these lists are presented in the following table.

Tab.6.1 - Registered Young Unemployed People

Date	31.12.1977	31.12.1978	31.12.1979
North	147,942	151,535	148,049
Centre	149,629	163,412	184,561
South	443,861	499,627	564,561
Total	741,431	814,574	898,199

Source: Ministero del Lavoro, 1980:193.

(19) See ISFOL, 1980:53 ("the result of the Act has been positive in counting the young"); Ministero del Lavoro, 1980:193 ("The Youth Unemployment Act has at least left a picture of youth unemployment"); from the trade unions' point of view, see De Anna (1977:5) and Crea ("The first and important result of the Act has been that it has depicted a large area of social and economic deprivation, and has pointed out the problem of employment and of the productive role of hundreds and thousands of young people, some with higher levels of education, some without the compulsory school certificate." 1977:5).

(20) See Bruno (in Formez, 1981:13) and Arrigo (1983:129) about the opposition that theories of human capital ("training for stock") or active manpower policies have encountered in Italy.

(21) The fragmentation is a consequence of the fact that the Cabinet in the Italian system has no actual capability for co-ordination of the overall policy of Ministers (Hine, 1979:162-163).

(22) The 'non no-confidence' Government is an odd phrase to indicate the minority Christian Democratic Governments sustained, with abstentions or support, in Parliament by the left-wing Parties. These Governments included the third Andreotti Government (August 1976-January 1978) and the fourth Andreotti Government (March 1978-January 1979). In this last Government, the Communist Party was included in the Government majority, but not in the Government (see Furlong, 1982:185). At the time these Governments were referred to as 'Governments of national solidarity' and the political strategy of the Communist Party was labelled 'historical compromise'.

(23) At least two Acts may be considered part of the "emergency legislation": Act n.285 (Youth Employment Plan) and Act n.675 (Industrial Restructuring).

(24) We have to consider that, as Furlong says, "the PCI fought the 1976 election on the strategy of the historic compromise and as the party of 'clean hands', the party of administrative efficiency and honesty" (Furlong, 1982:184).

(25) See Rassegna Sindacale, 22, 343 (26 February 1976:13ff) for the document approved by the Central Committee of the Federazione CGIL-CISL-UIL (umbrella organisation including the three major trade unions).

(26) See Corriere della sera, 6 February 1977:2; 6 April 1977:2; Rassegna Sindacale, 22, 343 (26 February 1976:13).

(27) With the 'non no-confidence' Government, policies were determined at least nominally at regular meetings of the five secretaries of the governing parties with Prime Minister Andreotti (Furlong, 1982:185).

(28) Di Palma has advanced the view that the growing role of Parliament in the legislative process during the 1970's was a new way of balance between the Government and the Communist Party (Di Palma, 1979:405).

(29) See Senato della Repubblica, VII Legislatura, Assemblea V, 116 seduta 28 April 1977: 5062ff.

(30) A special recruitment scheme in the public sector was openly opposed by the Communist Party and the Republican Party. The Government withdrew the proposal.

(31) Large coverage was provided in the media with a detailed account of the several proposals. See Corriere della sera (4 Febbraio 1977:2); Il Sole 24 ore (3 February 1977:3); L'Unità (1 February 1977:4).

(32) In an interview the vice-president of CONFINDUSTRIA said that an explicit request by the CONFINDUSTRIA for a meeting with the Parliamentary Committee was turned down because it was seen as unnecessary (Il Sole 24 ore, 24.5.1977:1).

(33) The Minister of Employment referred in Parliament to the contact established with the European Commission on the youth measures (Senato della Repubblica, VII Legislatura 116 Seduta, 28 April 1977:5077). In the same context the Minister added: "In the context of the European Community, the Italian attempt is the first attempt to look for a solution..."(idem). See also Corriere della sera, 27 April 1977:25, for a report on the visit of the EC Commissioner for Social Affairs.

(34) The Youth Unemployment Act provided for: 1. Regional plans concerning vocational training courses (section 2). 2. Permanent employment through financial incentives given to employers (section 6). 3. Co-operative units in the agricultural sector (sections 18-24). 4. Employment and training contract (section 7). 5. Community programmes ("Progetti socialmente utili") sponsored by public institutions.

LIT 1,060 miliardi were allocated for the implementation of the Plan and over the period 1977-1980 (1977: LIT 90 miliardi; 1978: LIT 380 miliardi; 1979: LIT 320 miliardi; 1980: LIT 270 miliardi).

(35) The youth entrepreneurship was another issue under discussion which had ideological and political resonance. See also European Centre, 1980b.

(36) These included vocational training, the placement system and upper secondary schools; of these only the first was completed with the Act passed in 1978 ("Legge quadro sulla formazione professionale").

(37) See the Bill ("Institution and regulation concerning the training contract") submitted to the Camera dei Deputati (Parliament) on 18 September 1980. See Economia Istruzione e Formazione Professionale (4,15 1981:117-138) for a discussion of the Bill.

(38) See note n.63 of this Chapter.

(39) A description of measures and proposals in Ufficio di Documentazione e Ricerche, Senato, 1976, chap.4.; ISFOL, 1976, n.25:18ff; Bruno 1978:161-240.

(40) See Corriere della sera (3 December 1975); La Stampa (5 February 1976). Alberoni, a leading Italian sociologist, opposed the Andreatta plan pointing out the usual behaviour of social and political groups in Italy;

the fear was that all the part-time and temporary jobs would have been changed permanent jobs via political pressure.

(41) See I Consigli, 20-218(1976); FLM Notizie, 108, 27 July 1976:11ff.

(42) See Rinascita, 20.8.1976, n.33:11.

(43) See particularly Ventrella et al. (1981:27) for the identification of the link between school and work as the crucial aspect of the transition,

(44) Comparative references to the British and French experiences were very common. See Frey, Tendenze dell'occupazione, 2, 2-3 (1977); Regione Lombardia, 197; Rassegna Sindacale, 16-17 (28 August 1977):6ff.

(45) ISFOL was established in 1973 for research and planning in the area of vocational training, for technical assistance to the Regional Departments.

(46) From this point of view the situation was almost unique in Italian politics. Mr Zaccagnini, leader of the Christian Democratic Party, recognised that:

"The present conditions of dialogue among the political forces participating in the Andreotti Government is the most appropriate to the situation of the country". (Il Sole 24 Ore, 4 February 1977:3).

And the communist Cecchi commented in the PCI newspaper on the opening of the national conference on youth employment:

"We are going to take part in the National Conference and in the Parliamentary debate, and we do not pretend to have the truth in our hands." (L'Unità, 1 February 1977: 2).

(47) Senato della Repubblica, VII Legislatura :1500-2-3-4.

(48) See Bruno in Formez (1981:7) and Arrigo (1982:127) for a comment on the lack of research work and evaluative reports in the definition of the measures and in their implementation.

(49) In 1972 the main responsibility for the training system (see note n.1) was transferred to the Regional Governments. The rationale behind it, apart from the implementation of article 117 of the Italian Constitution, was to facilitate direct links between training opportunities and training needs. In addition vocational training was supposed to be an instrument within the planning function of the Regional Governments. See Hine, 1979:172-176, for an overview of the decentralisation in Italy.

(50) See plans drawn by Regional Government in Lombardia ("Piano Hazon") and in Emilia Romagna.

(51) See Report by the II Commission (16.2.1977:8).

(52) See Report by the II Commission (16.2.1977:8).

(53) See Fondazione Pastore, 1985, for regional legislation.

(54) In spite of their differing ideological and political backgrounds, trade unions (CGIL, CISL and UIL) at the time showed a broad agreement concerning the youth unemployment issue (see the common issue in 1977 of Rassegna Sindacale (CGIL), Conquiste del Lavoro (CISL) and Lavoro Italiano (UIL)). The position of the Federation CGIL-CISL-UIL (the umbrella organisation for the three unions) was as follows: 1. The measures in favour of the young unemployed have an exceptional character. 2. All the actions decided need to be implemented under trade union control. 3. New jobs have to be created outside the public sector. 4. The Regional Governments have to play a central role. 5. Training has to be organised under the control of the Regional Government and training totally controlled by firms has to be opposed. See Rassegna Sindacale, 6, 17 February 1977; Formazione Domani, 6, 62-63 (1977):4-15.

(55) See Balandi, 1978:20 ss.

(56) About the "post-conflict behaviour" of the Italian trade unions see FEDERMECCANICA, 1976; Cella, 1979:288ff; Furlong, 1982:186.

(57) See Fondazione Brodolini, 1982.

(58) See Crea, 1977.

(59) Within this agreement, a research programme about youth unemployment was carried out (Industria e sindacato, 11, 39 (1979):4-20). The same agreement made it possible to develop the 'qualification contracts' - a solution similar to the employment and training contract, but with more emphasis on training (specific training and training leading to a qualification were provided for).

(60) In an interview a senior official of the CONFINDUSTRIA pointed out two factors that prevented employers from more involvement. They were: the complexity of the procedure in recruiting young people from the special lists and the lack of suitable training provision from the Regional Governments.

(61) Mr Trentin, a CGIL leader, claimed in 1980 that 95 per cent of recruitment took place outside public and formal channels (ISFOL, 1980b:83). See also note n.4.

(62) Corriere della Sera, 29 May 1977:1.

(63) In 1983 a new piece of legislation (Law Decree n.17 29 January 1977 "Misure per il contenimento del costo del lavoro e per favorire l'occupazione" -- Measures to reduce labour costs and to promote employment) introduced a training contract with the free selection by employers of the young and the total responsibility of employers in the organisation of training (training meant mainly work experience). In the period from 1 January 1983 and 31 January 1984, 162, 442 contracts were signed and 79,4% of them were subsequently transformed in permanent employment (ISFOL, 1984b:16).

(64) See Corriere della Sera (19 June 1977:1), for an enthusiastic comment by Ferrarotti, a well-known sociologist.

(65) Rassegna Sindacale, 30 (28 July 1977):21.

(66) Mr Lama, CGIL leader, considered the 1977 Act "an imperfect but valid instrument" and said that "the Act may be used as the link, for which we have been searching for long time, between school and work, between young generation and world of work". (Rinascita, 30 (29 July 1977):3.

(67) Regione Lombardia, 1978:55.

(68) CONFINDUSTRIA, 1977.

(69) Apprenticeship figures were increasing: from 692, 171 in 1976 to 732,100 in 1979 (Ministero del Lavoro, 1980:198).

(70) See, Arrigo (1982;1983).

(71) Three situations may be identified. Employment and training contracts were signed in companies that were not as affected by the market conditions; in companies where the contracts were a sort of public relations exercise and in companies where there was a real shortage of skilled manpower. See Arrigo, 1983:54-55. Regione Lombardia, 1978:324-327.

(72) Among the main aspects of the old-fashioned system were: the organisation based on school patterns, the lack of proper training and of professional experience by the teachers, rigidity in the syllabuses, a lack of planning at the national level, a variety of standards among the

bodies providing training, an increasing role of the training courses as second-chance schooling, and poor motivation.

(73) See Chapter Two:Sect.2.4.5.

(74) An interviewee claimed that practitioners or managers of training centres were not part of the groups that prepared the Act.

(75) In an interview a training manager maintained that the short-term nature of the Act was due to the fear of trade unions. Some measures were initially considered as an "exception" to the current rules and regulations concerning recruitment and working conditions.

(76) There was a difference in attitude between the national organisation of employers and the individual employers (Arrigo, 1982:119; ISFOL, 1984b:33).

(78) In no interviews did we find a reference to the use of vocational training as a way of dealing with a time of economic recession and employment difficulties; policy objectives such as 'increase the quality of the workforce', 'training for the future' seemed not to be culturally and politically plausible. Further research is needed on this.

(79) Apart from the administrative difficulties (all the Regional Departments were created in the 1970's) there were political difficulties. See Cassese (1978:243) for a criticism of the Regional Governments as policy actors.

(80) The contrast with the French set of public agencies and private bodies and with the Manpower Services Commission in the United Kingdom is sharp.

(81) See the debate on Economia Istruzione e Formazione, 4, 15, 1981.

CHAPTER SEVEN

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING IN FRANCE

7.1 INTRODUCTION

There are several reasons for including the French case in an analysis of vocational training policies.(1) Historical and comparative arguments lend support to its salience.

In the history of education and training institutions, French technical schools have been looked at from abroad and have been rated as forerunners of a pattern which subsequently spread to other countries (Roderick and Stephens, 1978:79ff.). Artz, in his analysis of technical education in France from 1500 to 1850, recognises that:

"In the higher French technical schools of the eighteenth century is prefigured most of the accomplishments of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in advanced technical education".
(1966:111)

and

"Although before the Revolution France had, through schools like the Ecole des ponts et chaussées and the Ecole du génie militaire, taken the lead in developing the highest type of technical instruction, certainly this leadership was made more evident by the launching of institutions like the Ecole des arts et métiers, the Conservatoire des arts et métiers and the Ecole Polytechnique".
(1966:111)

In contemporary comparative studies, France provides an appropriate example of vocational training as an "in-school function" (Drouet, 1968; Johnson, 1987:37). This differs from the system in Japan, Federal Republic of Germany and Sweden. As Reubens says when discussing France:

"School-based vocational education is the leading method of offering occupational skill

training to young people who have not yet entered the labour market". (1982:50)

More recently several education and training issues have found considerable resonance and a fertile hotbed for development in the French context (BIT, 1979; European Centre, 1980a; 1982d). The transition from school to work ("insertion professionnelle des jeunes") is one of these issues (De Maupeou-Abboud, 1985) for which in the last ten years a plethora of youth training measures have been designed and implemented. According to some international observers (Auken, 1984:75; OECD, 1984b) these youth schemes (2) bear testimony to an original approach the problem of youth employment and are seen as parallel to initiatives carried out in other countries (OECD, 1982:110).

In accordance with the research design we shall focus on the training measures adopted in the framework of the National Employment Pacts ("Pactes Nationaux pour l'Emploi" 1977-1981) with the aim of investigating how they affected vocational training policies and their development.(3) Two sources of background information are used. First, the overall picture of the youth situation in the labour market in France is provided by a huge and varied literature. General reports, specific surveys and socio-psychological studies have contributed both to a descriptive view and have provided quantitative data. These will be referred to in the course of this Chapter. Second, it is not possible to understand the youth schemes without some acquaintance with French politics. The bureaucratic setting and the 'stalemate society' have been investigated by Crozier (1970); the legacy of statism has been viewed as one of the more peculiar aspects of French policy-making (Heidenheimer, Heclo and Adams, 1983). Others scholars have paid attention to the system of planning, the dirigist pattern (Premfors, 1981). The assertive style of policy making (Hayward,

1982) and the actual working of the administration (Dupuy and Thoenig, 1985) have proved to be new sources of interest. More usefully, others such as Ashford (1982), have stressed the need to move from grand theory about French politics to the analysis of how the policy process responds to major social, economic and political issues.

Despite the amount of research carried out in both directions, there have been few attempts to link policy analysis with an investigation of the training system. The current view of the French training system has been anchored to the image of state controlled vocational education in schools. Useful insights are provided by some pieces of research about training systems (Vaudiaux, 1974; Rose, 1980; Maurice and Sellier, 1982; Figeat, 1983; D'Iribarne, 1984). Exploratory analyses of the policy process in the area of training have been carried out by a few others (Fourcade and Ricaud, 1979; De Maupeou-Abboud, 1980; Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984).

In line with the analysis developed in the two previous Chapters, the basic questions (see Chapter One: Sect.1.4) of interest here are:

a) What was the policy background to the youth training measures? What was the salience of the "actions jeunes 1975-1981" for Government policy? How did they meet the Government's objectives?

b) How was the transition from school to work issue constructed (map of interests, policy contents and presentation, conflicts...)? What was the role assigned to training in the spectrum of policy measures?

c) How did youth training measures such as employment and training contracts ("contrats de formation et travail") or work experience programmes ("stages pratiques en entreprise") relate to the existing and established pattern of initial and further training provision? What were the elements of continuity and change?

This Chapter consists of five sections. The first presents the main training issues relating to existing provision. The second explores the Government's stance and policy in the economic, manpower and training area with reference to the specific measures adopted in face of youth unemployment. The third maps the basic interests involved and their relationships with the Government; the fourth identifies some peculiar aspects of the implementation machinery concerned with the youth schemes; the fifth investigates the contents of the policy. The conclusion points out some generalisations from the French case which contribute to the current investigation of the construction of vocational training policy.

7.2 INITIAL AND FURTHER TRAINING

In this section the scene for this part of the investigation is set. This includes a description of traditional arrangements of initial training in schools, an illustration of the existing dichotomy between initial and further training and its wide-range bearings (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:11) and the identification of some issues in the French vocational training policies.

Traditionally initial vocational training in France has been mainly provided by technical and vocational schools and by apprenticeship.⁽⁴⁾ While apprenticeship has played a minor and residual role (in 1975, 12.5 per cent of the school leavers after compulsory school went into apprenticeship: OECD, 1979b:27), schools have been the main training institutions; they include short technical education (set up under employers' control and taken over by the State in the 1950's: Fourcade and

Ricaud, 1979:229; Tanguy, 1985:30), and long technical education. This system leads to specialisations that correspondent to categories of jobs.(5) As a result of this insertion of technical schools into the education system, vocational education and general education have a common national administrative framework. In her comparative description of the French vocational training system, Reubens identifies four main aspects of initial training:

"1. The degree of control over education exercised by the national Ministry of Education in Paris exceeds that of central governments in other countries.

2. Post-compulsory education is divided into a long cycle, mostly academic, and a short cycle. There is some advanced technical education in the long cycle while initial skilled-worker training and technician training are found in the short cycle. Each has a vertical structure through the higher education level.

3. School-based vocational education has been the dominant form, with apprenticeship a smaller program mainly confined to the artisan trades.

4. Great importance is attached to the acquisition of occupational certificates and diplomas after the compulsory years for those not proceeding to higher education. Occupational certificates and diplomas are granted nationally by a complex, external examination system, which examines both the practical and theoretical knowledge of candidates from the educational system, apprenticeship and working life". (1982:66)

This pattern has been widely analysed and presented in the international literature as a non-comprehensive system of secondary education. It is the outcome of a long-term historical development and still inspires the ideology of training and education in France. The several reforms that this system underwent from 1945 on (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:18ff), have not changed its basic

assumptions. Initial training is an in-school function and the related policy process is highly centralised.

Initial training contrasts sharply with the sector of further education and training i.e. the other of the two main components of the French vocational training system ("formation professionnelle"). This sector arose in the late 1960's and was institutionalised in 1971 (Besnard and Lietard, 1982; Vincens and Cabanis, 1979; Legave and Vignaud, 1982; D'Iribarne, 1984; Gehin, 1984). The differences between these two sectors are overwhelming and the two sectors operate in completely different ways.

First, initial training and further training are organised in two different frameworks: the former is centralised and provided by the school system, the latter is controlled by the State, but is based upon collective agreement and negotiation ("concertation") between employers and trade unions. There is a legal framework and inter-trade agreements at its base, i.e. "la loi et l'accord" (Reynaud, 1975:266). (6) Concerted action and co-operation among policy actors (Government, employers, trade unions and private-public institutions) are required for policy definition, planning and management of training activities. The development of these arrangements reflected changes not only in the Government's stance but also in the attitudes of the major "social partners". Under Mr Ceyrac chairmanship, the Employers National Association (Conseil National du Patronat Français-CNPF) policy did change and fostered more "concertation" at the national level, not only for industrial relations, but also for other related matters, such as training (Bunel and Saglio, 1980; Gladstone, 1985:55). As far as trade unions are concerned, while doctrinal intransigence and difficulties of negotiation in the field of industrial relations have been pointed out (Reynaud, 1981: 257), a departure from this cultural

model of behaviour in the early 1970's has been identified (Delamotte, 1971). As a consequence training became a new area for negotiations and collective agreements.

Second, while the Government is responsible for further education and training and provides financial support, a compulsory contribution by employers (1.1 pc of the total amount of wages in 1971) has been introduced (European Centre, 1980a; Legave and Vignaud, 1982:76). It was the 1971-578 Act that promoted the idea of an employer financed training; employers were asked to pay a fixed percentage of wages and the tax for apprenticeship ("taxe d'apprentissage") This obligation left to the employers the choice of the way of discharging it (7).

The arrangements for further training may be considered as a u-turn in French training policy and a move from direct action (initial vocational training in schools) to Government sponsored market solutions (See Chapter Two:Sect.2.3). The 1970 agreement and the 1971 Act did not originate a new branch of "public service" or an enlargement of the school system, but it created a "marché de la formation" (training market).(8) Several observers have used this term (training market) in depicting the intervention of several institutions in the provision of training, on a very pluralistic basis. The traditional method of growth for school systems, i.e. by adding new lines and bodies, was abandoned. The "market" was crowded by private and public training bodies; no monopoly and no exclusive status of the Ministries of Education and Employment survived. This represented a long-term source of change. Besnard and Lietard give this summary of the change:

"Particularly after 1970, a training market developed in the field of adult education and training in France, and it was supported by resources made available by employers and

public power. Education appeared to be under the rules of a consumeristic pattern. There is a great number of suppliers of training; they try to respond directly to the demand coming from the market" (1982:71).

Another important component of this new approach to education and training needs is the idea and the stress upon the individual right to "educational leave" for which special provision were included in 1971 Act. This could either be viewed from educational or employment-related perspectives. There was not, of course, an overall consensus about training and education: opposing views of training and education coexisted and were the real "enjeu" between participating actors (Vaudiaux, 1974).

The working of the system modified the role of the Government and of employers and the balance between interests in the control of training; it met the demands of employers. Besnard and Lietard say:

"Training systems traditionally providing "free" training such as voluntary organisations and universities are forced in order to survive, to accept either direct control by employers for training financed by them, either an imposed economic rationality by the state, or both, as they share common aims-support of the economy and of employment" (1982:71).

Conceived and set up in a period of economic growth and expansion, with a consequent need of skilled workers, the "formation continue" has been reorientated in the late 1970's: some basic features, however, affected subsequent developments.

Bearing in mind the two basic patterns - initial and continuing training -, an attempt may be made to list the major issues that could possibly be relevant for the formation of a new training policy for the youth in the second half of the 1970's.

First, it is important to recognise that, more than in other countries, "formation professionnelle" is presented as a "national duty"(9); there is a formal commitment to training which is not left to a voluntary action by employers. This philosophy has been rooted in the school-based system of training, but it constantly remained as an inspiring principle in the following development. As a consequence of this ideological and integrated view, the individual interests of social partners needed to be conceived in terms of "common goals". This principle inspired the positive action by the Government in favour of the youth; the large number of reports by the Planning Commission (10) repeatedly stated the Government commitment to provide vocational training for all young people. It was not something new, but an application of a long-standing principle.

Second, the end of the Government's monopoly in the provision of training, as it had happened for continuing training raised several issues. Employers entered the training area; under the blanket cover of "national goals" they had to accommodate their interests and motivations (Caspar, 1970). It was not a cosmetic change; employers developed new strategies (Fourcade and Ricaud, 1979; De Maupeou-Abboud, 1980).

Third, training policy had an inter-ministerial (11) and an inter-trade basis; legislative actions and national agreements were parallel instruments for policy formation and implementation. Such a complexity covered a difficult compromise between a centralised system in which the Government is the leading actor and a voluntaristic one where employers and trade unions are the crucial actors. Several plans of actions were involved and it was difficult to foresee their possible development.

Fourth, vocational training has for a long time been a component of education; as a consequence, training has usually be dealt with in strong ideological terms. Any change in this area would likely to be formulated in a satisfactory vocabulary.(12)

These were the main issues at stake when youth unemployment appeared as a source of concern for policy actors. Although the youth schemes may be considered as an innovative set of measures, they were forged with the existing conceptual and administrative instruments. More than in other countries initial training changed and, at the same time, maintained its links with the previous arrangements.

7.3 THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING ISSUES: THE CASE OF YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

7.3.1 The Perception and the Management of the Crisis

The basic issues identified so far are at the basis of the policy process; they are well rooted in a contextual web of links. Changes in several areas may modify the way in which issues are processed and enter the political agenda. In this section the implications for training of a series of changes in Government policy that took place in the second half of the 1970's are pointed out. As discussed in the first chapter, vocational training issues are very often dealt with according to broader political issues, particularly economic, industrial and manpower policies.

From this point of view, the first and the second halves of the 1970's (Casey, 1983; Green, 1984:140-141) provided different backgrounds to French training

policies; there was a marked modification in the perception about economic and general perspectives and in decisions taken in economic, manpower and training areas.(13) In the early 1970's the recession was perceived as a temporary event and the general atmosphere was optimistic. This assessment, seen in a report submitted to the General Planning Commission, today appears totally unrealistic:

"...there are no physical stumbling blocks preventing economic growth in the next five years". (Commissariat Generale du Plan, 1975:9)

and moreover:

"It appears possible to base the Seventh Plan on the assumptions that, unless a crisis, which can never be ruled out, emerges the growth of the production of goods and services, although a little less in the next fifteen years, will not be stopped by difficulties impossible to overcome. This growth will, instead, be consistent with current trends in the evolution of the factors of production".(Commissariat Generale du Plan, 1975:13)

In the mid 1970's a rapid return to full employment was, officially, still considered to be attainable, as a result of a "sortie de la crise". Short-term considerations of the economic difficulties were reflected in Parliamentary debates where non-alarmist views were held by members of the Government. In 1975 Mr Durafour, Secretary of State for Employment, answered questions posed by representatives of all political parties by offering an optimistic view of employment perspectives for youth; after having presented the data (in April 1974 285,500 young people were unemployed) he claimed that:

"Youth unemployment cannot be neglected: it presents painful aspects. However, it cannot be overestimated. We clearly see that young people are, till now, less affected by unemployment in comparison with adults, although they may suffer more from the results of the state of

affairs". (Journal officiel, Debats
Parlementaires, 41 AN, Mardi 27 Mai 1975:3248-
90) (14)

The political opposition was, however, very strong. In 1975 a left-wing MP posed the problem in Parliament in these words:

"In 1974 (31 May) there were 150,189 young people under 25 seeking jobs. In 1975 they became 288,876; among them only 79,321 were receiving help by public services. The figures of unemployed people have doubled. A sad record! and such an accusation against our regime, our Government!. (Journal Officiel, 46 AN, DP Jeudi, 5 Juin 1975:3682)

Short term considerations of the economic difficulties did not lead to a review of current training policies designed for a period of economic and social growth. Reports for the seventh plan included a careful analysis of training. The uneasy match between school output and the labour market and the situation of young people leaving school without a recognised qualification were the two main sources of concern. In an official report this concern is voiced in these terms:

"As far as initial training is concerned, the emphasis has been put upon the increasing difficulties related to the gap between the higher level of qualification and the supply of jobs and upon the priority actions aiming to promote training of young people, very often without a general or specific training". (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1975:77)

Meanwhile in the education and training areas, there was a development of "formation continue" and several issues were dealt with in opposing ways by different political parties (Vincens, 1978).

The strains of the recession modified this expansionary approach; in 1976 the crisis was explicitly presented as a long term one. The accession to the

Presidency of Giscard d'Estaing in 1974 and the replacement of J.Chirac by R.Barre as Prime Minister in 1976, symbolised a definitive change of direction for the Government. In addition the 1978 right-wing electoral success sanctioned a u-turn in Governmental economic policy (Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984:152) and Mr Barre's severity programme ("plan de rigueur") derived from a change in the dominant political orientation. Hayward (1982) identifies this change as a move from "dirigisme to reliance upon macro-economic monetary and fiscal instruments for combating inflation" (1982:133) with a belief in the political virtues and economic efficiency of competitive market forces.

The optimistic Seventh Plan was radically modified by the 1978 Report on the Adaptation of the Seventh Plan; this formed the basis for a u-turn in Government policy by openly stating this perspective on employment:

"Whatever the size of the efforts may be, we cannot hope to go back to full employment in the short term. Moreover employment is a concern not only for the Government. Unemployment is the outcome of the working of the society as a whole. Everybody has his own role to perform for the improvement of employment".(Commissariat Général du Plan, 1978:79)

With this u-turn, the second phase of the French manpower policy in the 1970's (Casey, 1983:2) started. As far as training is concerned, there was a certain stagnation of the "formation continue" and two long-term implications for training can be identified. First, the attitude of the Government appeared to be widely modified. It was not just a set of anti-inflationary measures to be proposed and taken; it was a move towards a less "dirigiste" political attitude and the Government was committed to remove constraints (fiscal and administrative) on the business sector. The task of

fighting unemployment was a societal task, not only a Government duty. It was a problem to be dealt with, not only a new area of Government involvement. Second, the need to develop short-term measures for tackling the consequences of unemployment led to a search for flexible and temporary formulae leading to a social treatment of unemployment ("traitement social du chômage": Mauroy, 1985:29).

7.3.2 Unemployment and Political Pressure

While Government economic policy furnished the framework for policy decisions, a mounting political pressure forced the Government to consider unemployment as a very sensitive area. Although data since the early 1970's had shown some difficulties in the labour market, it was not until 1975 that unemployment emerged as a serious problem in France. Labour surveys showed an increasing percentage of unemployed youth compared with unemployment adults; in two years, from 1973 to 1975, youth unemployment almost doubled.

The French Government, as others in western countries, came under pressure on the unemployment issue. As seen in the previous chapters, no Government is in a position to accept sic et simpliciter without any risks, a situation of growing unemployment. The resonance of the unemployment issue in Parliamentary debate (15), in the media and in the course of the 1978 general election, reached high levels. Moreover, in the 1978 general election French people were presented with a choice of society (Aron, 1978). (16) The alarm was started in the media several times (17). The awareness that unemployment could be a permanent feature of French society (Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984:149) was growing. The risk of high unemployment was widely voiced by the political

opposition. In a general meeting of the CGT, young unemployed committee, Mr Seguy, general secretary of CGT, said:

"Without immediate and relevant measures, France will have one million of unemployed people under 25 from next autumn". (CGT, 1976:124)

These pressures arose in the context of a mounting concern about the youth. Official reports and several studies, as well as opinion makers illustrated the situation of young people out of work. Rousselet (1974) and others, as will be mentioned in Section 7.6, provided the elements for such a process.

The debate was, of course, just the surface of a heavy social and political conflict; the youth unemployment issue became a political issue. Trade Unions gradually gave the issue high level priority (FO Hebdo, 1454, 21.1.1976:10). They abandoned working parties on the General Planning Commission, organised mass demonstrations for the unemployed such as the "droit au travail" (right to work) in Paris, on 4th October 1975. Moreover trade unions mobilised the unemployed youth and provided an organised setting for them. CGT took the lead in this process. Mr Allamy, secretary of CGT said:

"We are going to organise the unemployed and the young in order to guarantee their rights". (Le Monde, 1975, 26 April:46)

Union leaders invited the young to join the unemployed youth groups ("a prendre en main leurs luttes dans des comités de jeunes chômeurs" Le Monde, 7 October 1975:35). Youth organisations, such as JOC, supported this movement.

All these pressures exerted a considerable effect upon the policy process. Three mechanisms for dealing with

youth unemployment, which emerged as a reaction to this issue, may be identified. First, special attention was devoted by the Government to the measurement of the problem, in particular to the arrangement of statistical data (Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984:153) and to the resonance of the Government initiatives in the media (e.g. setting up the INFFO). Second, the Government was not given the chance to wait and see. With a "précipitation étonnante" (Pieltre and Schiller, 1979:35) special programmes were launched. Third, it was a matter for 'immediate action' and substantial effort; long-term reforms as well as small scale actions could not appear to be suitable for the Government. The consistence of the Government's economic policy led to a redefinition of the problem of unemployment by indicating an overall solution to the problem in the future. It was a question of reconciling a certain implicit acceptance of unemployment among the youth and the image of a non-passive Government facing this issue. In an official document this state of mind was presented in these words:

"By thinking that it was not possible to solve the unemployment problem in the Seventh Plan, the Commission proposed a twofold approach aiming at providing all young people with a training qualification and at setting up, as temporary measures, training and work opportunity for the unqualified young. Members of the Commission have emphasised the temporary nature of these measures. These are necessary in giving young people leaving school during the Seventh Plan better chances of getting a job; however, they must not be an alibi for maintaining the present system". (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1976d:46).

7.3.3 The Quest for a Manpower Policy

The 1974-1975 world recession was a crucial factor in facilitating the development of a labour market policy and increasing resources devoted to it. A few authors

converged in pointing out the underdevelopment of manpower policies in France (European Commission, 1977:34ff; Casey, 1983; Therborn, 1986:140ff); however costs for "action publique en faveur de l'emploi" moved from 0.9% of PIB in 1973 to 2.25% in 1980 (Ministère de l'Emploi, 1982:8).(18)

Uncertainty in dealing with youth unemployment is shown in the sharp contrast between data and views publicly held by members of the Government. Preliminary studies for the Seventh Plan had shown the link between economic growth and the number of unemployed people: the figures depicted a very bleak perspective: a growth of 5.2% in 1976-1980 would mean 600.000 unemployed people; a growth of 3.8% would lead to more than one million unemployed.

Full employment was still presented as an attainable policy goal. Mr Giscard d'Estaing said in an interview:

"The main aim of the Seventh Plan will be full employment". (Le Monde, 22.1.1976: 28)

Suddenly, however, it appeared difficult to maintain such a presentation; a month later in the same newspaper, Mr Ripert, one of the members of the Planning Commission, said:

"The priority goal of the Seventh Plan is full employment; this goal will be very difficult to achieve" (Le Monde, 5.2.1976;30).

This change in policy presentation was accompanied by a big effort in developing new policy instruments: this was the origin of a new stage in labour market policy. Casey (1983), in his comparative paper, has identified in France two distinct periods between the first oil price rise in 1973 and the election of the first socialist government in 1981. "La rupture de 1977" (Colin et al., 1981) led to the development of new labour market policy instruments.

The first aspect of this change of attitude was a marked move from a passive and defensive strategy, i.e. mainly providing compensation for those who would lose their employment, to an active strategy (Ministère de l'Emploi, 1982:8; Casey, 1983:26). The main avenue in the past had been "la politique de protection de l'emploi". Prior to 1976, Government policy in this area was based upon the assumption of growth and of need of "social protection" (Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984:152). The need for change was presented by PM Chirac in these words:

"Our unemployment benefit system is generous... but in some cases, it does not incite to look for a job". (Le Monde, 22 June 1976:36)

He called for:

"a mobilisation of a great deal of financial means, not for direct aid, but for job creation, linked to vocational training of the young". (Idem)

The development of special manpower measures took place in the context of a liberal approach to economic policy. This affected the way in which the necessary adjustment of education and training to the economic situation was conceived. The classic manpower approach (i.e. the planning of training activities on the basis of forecasted and planned economic growth) was abandoned in favour of a neo-liberal atmosphere. Grapin notices:

"What we are looking for is not a quantitative forecast but a certain flexibility of the education system. Seventh Plan reports give evidence of the new state of mind, at the same time pragmatic and, beyond the liberal appearance, more Malthusian". (1977: 564)

The improvement of the working of the labour market was to be through the development of a better labour administration service; specialised agencies such as ANPE and ONISEP enlarged their activities.

As far as training is concerned, this change had some remarkable implications. First of all, there was a need to redefine priorities. PM Barre was adamant about this:

"First of all, we have to define new aims. In 1970, France was in a situation of 'overemployment'. As far as training was concerned, priority status was given to the further training to which most funds were devoted. Today, our priority targets is training of those who have no job or have lost it". (Actualite de la Formation Permanente, 27 (1977):42)

This had two types of implications: the first was a decreasing role played by training in the context of the manpower measures and the second, a concentrated use of resources for youth. Resources for training passed from 56% in 1973 to 33% in 1977 and to 30% in 1980 of the total costs of manpower policy (Ministère de l'Emploi, 1982:9). There was an increase in action for job seekers and the youth became the priority (Ministère de l'Emploi, 1982:10). The unemployed youth was identified as a "groupe cible" and became the target of several actions by the Government. This was openly stated in the 1978 Rapport sur l'adaptation du 7e plan (1978:88). A major emphasis was placed on the unqualified and unskilled young; this concern was supported by available figures showing higher unemployment rates among new entrants to the labour market without qualification than among young people with qualification.

It has been argued that the role of this active labour market policy was very small given the fiscal and monetary policy at the time; Casey (1983:105) maintains that in France there existed neither the theoretical nor the administrative basis for an active labour market policy. A neo-liberal solution to the problem of employment creation was dominant in the second half of

the 1970's; large scale programmes did not develop. In this situation the salience of training measures for a target group - the young - was bound to increase.

7.3.4 Youth Measures and Training

It was against this background (economic policy, political pressure and manpower policy) that youth training schemes have to be examined. Public concern about youth employment was not new in France; neither was the link between vocational training and youth unemployment. In 1971 the Government had reformed and strengthened technical education with the "loi d'orientation sur l'enseignement technique et professionnelle"; in 1977 it renewed technical schools, establishing the "lycées d'enseignement professionnel" to provide training leading to the lower qualifications (CAP and BEP) and the "lycées techniques" to provide the new technician training leading to the BTS.

The Employment Pacts were large scale efforts with a two-fold aim and included a mixture of old and new measures. The aims were to favour the insertion of young people by compensating for their inexperience through economic premiums and exemptions for employers who were prepared to hire or train young people and to improve or adapt the training of people leaving the education system. The Pacts could be considered as large scale applications of the principle of the "alternance" or labour market policy measures aiming at reducing unemployment. In the framework of the youth measures, there was a ventilation of schemes (temporary employment, "pré-formation"...). Some of these were not all new; some had already existed on a smaller scale since the early 1970's. However, the number and the variety of youth measures conceived and placed in the framework of the

National Pactes pour l'emploi, were without precedent in France. The National Employment Pactes launched in three subsequent phases from 1977 to 1981 were comprehensive frameworks including several measures aimed at opening up jobs, encouraging firms to take on new employees, and facilitating vocational training among the young.

Training measures were crucially placed at the core of the Pactes. This was a logical consequence of a long-standing position largely shared by policy actors. In the list of 25 "programmes d'action prioritaire" included in the VII plan (1976-1980) "l'amélioration de la formation professionnelle des jeunes (sans qualification)" had been singled out. The first of the new schemes was set up in 1975. Under the headings of "stages Granet" these were training stages for young people between 16 and 20 year old. About 15,000 young people were involved. These schemes were the forerunners of a series of training programmes.

Training appeared appealing from several points of view. It provided a largely acceptable presentation of the problem of youth unemployment. Even by 1975, PM Chirac, in a parliamentary debate, could affirm without any reaction:

"...the difficult situation of the young in the labour market derives to a large extent, from a lack of appropriate training". (Journal Officiel, 46 AN Jeudi 5 juin 1975:3533).

This view was officially spread and became a common sense matter. Mr Oheix, from the Ministry of Employment, said:

"The most important problem is youth unemployment. Its growth is not only a temporary phenomenon linked to the crisis. It is a mass phenomenon that reveals the inadequacy of training and the gap between demand and supply". (Le Monde, 12 August 1975:18)

That employers, among others, proposed and supported special solutions combining minimum wage (SMIC) and training is easy to understand; the simple compensation ("indemnisation") of unemployment did not appear to be either a satisfactory solution to youth unemployment or a durable and permanent solution. (Le Monde, 11.3.1976).

The new programmes (OECD, 1984b: 60-65) included three main types: "stages de formation", "stages pratiques en entreprise" (19) and employment and training contracts. (20) The training stages were set up for the 16-26 age group and provided about 800 hour training in a six month period; the Government provided for the trainees the 25% of the minimum wage if under 18, 75% if over. The number of trainees was over sixty thousand in the first Pact and under forty thousand in the last Pact. The more successful formulae were the practical training programmes ("Stages pratiques en entreprise") and employment and training contracts.

The "stages pratiques en entreprise" (Amat, 1985) were created in 1977 for young unemployed people. The age range of the target group was modified: in the first Pact the programme was open to young people from 16 to 25; in the last it was open to 16-18 only. The duration changed from 4 (first plan) to 6 (third plan) months with about 200 or 120 (second and third plan) hours of training in the firm or in training centres. Trainees were payed by the Government in the reason of 90pc of the SMIC (410 Fr for young people under 18 in the first Plan). The number of places was very high: in 1977-1978 it reached over 140,000, as in 1980-1981; figures were smaller in 1978-1979 (20.000) and in 1979-1980 (55.000). The "stages" appeared as a necessary complement to a school-based training; they could easily be accepted by employers, particularly for young people without any qualifications. Employment and training contracts were introduced in 1975 and subsequently included in the National Pacts. (21) They

consisted of a normal employment contract between the firm and the young worker and an agreement between the employer and the State as to the subsidy provided by the State on the basis of the number of training hours (from 200 to 1,200 hours according to ever-changing arrangements). The number of signed contracts rose from 26,354 in the first Pact to 64,719 in the last one. There were two modes developed in the third Pact: "contract d'insertion" and "contract de qualification" (Amat, 1985:83ff).⁽²²⁾ Apprenticeship was also reformed and remained inside this new structure of initial training.⁽²³⁾

All these types of action represented the greater part of young people concerned; the other relevant measure was the exemption from social security payments for young employed people. This substantial and consistent involvement in training led to there being around 10% of the targeted age-group involved in one or the other training measures during the third Pact; in the two previous Pacts the involvement was of the 15% and 8%. Such an effort had long-term implications for initial and continuing training. Two of these implications will be considered here.

First, the launch and the implementation of the youth training measures in the area of initial training brought about changes in the sector of "formation continue". While the school system required time and authority in order to be converted or adjusted to a new demanding situation, the flexibility of the continuing training proved to be suitable. In fact, the "formation continue" had been designed in a period of growth and for employed people; it was, therefore, unsuitable for dealing with unemployed people and as a policy instrument for dealing with mass unemployment. However, the financial mechanism, the working of the system, the "open market" were

solutions to be exploited. A sharp change in priorities became necessary in order to move from a wealthy provision of training to a search for policy measures in order to cope with a very sensitive problem. Mr Soissons, Secretary of State attached to the PM and in charge of training, maintained in 1976:

"It is time to link, more than in the past, continuing training to manpower policy" (Le Monde, 23.4.1976:33)

This was the beginning of a reorientation. In 1980 Mr Delors, "father" of the 1971 Act on further training and former secretary general to the inter-ministerial committee for vocational training recognised that it was necessary to relaunch further training ("donner un second souffle à la formation permanente") to be considered not as "une nécessité des années de vaches grasses", but as "une impérieuse nécessité des années de vaches maigres" (Le Monde, 20.1.1980). And, of course, unemployment also meant youth unemployment; the role of the "formation continue" was "favoriser l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes".

A second implication concerns long-term developments. The Pacts were launched as exceptional operations due to an exceptional situation. However, several lines of developments were set up. The employment and training contracts and the "stages de formation" were subsequently modified but maintained in the "Plan avenir jeunes" set up by the Government in 1981. They constituted the backbone of the "alternance" - an educational ideology developed in the late 1970's in France to indicate the mixed system of training. Moreover the Schwartz report (Schwartz, 1982) and the policy initiatives based upon this report included these contracts and "stages". The programmes of practical experience in firms were terminated in 1981 because of unsatisfactory results and

because of criticism from trade unions about their use by employers.

This process shows that measures introduced as temporary and contingent were gradually modified in order to meet the demand or non-opposition by policy actors and institutionalised as permanent or quasi-permanent formulae for completing the initial training. By seeing employment problems as training problems, a long-term and sound therapy could be presented by political actors; at the same time it opened the field for all those innovative resources that, for sometime, had identified the shortcomings of a school-based system of training. Behind the figures and the political presentation, it was the configuration of interests that guaranteed the success of the youth schemes.

7.4 THE GOVERNMENT-GROUPS RELATIONSHIP AND THE CONFIGURATION OF TRAINING INTERESTS

7.4.1 From concerted politics to confrontation

The Employment Acts have been a way of social treatment of unemployment ("régulation sociale du chômage") and were set up in a highly controversial context. Bipolarisation of French politics (Wright, 1984) was in evidence in the 1970's. Several factors had altered previous concerted politics, consensus building and the institutionalisation of dialogue between Government and groups. Adoption by the PCF of a strong anti-consensus tone in 1977-1978, the fragmentation of social interests (particularly trade unions), divisive views in crucial policy areas such as anti-inflation measures (e.g. Joint Programme of the left and Barre's Plan) all made political alignment a basic feature of the policy

process. PM Barre's scepticism about national planning and its view of social partners as groups to be resisted were just other aspects of the breakdown of concerted action.

This change in the political climate sharply affected training. It modified the "contractual approach of the early 1970's to training matters" (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:46) that was seen by Reynaud as:

"a change in the role of the State, to an enlarged delegation of authority to interest groups and to a change in the source of the law". (1981:259)

The youth measures were set up in a period of highly controversial and polarised political situation. Presented as a national response to youth unemployment, the Employment Pacts stemmed from a "Saint'Alliance" (Pieltre and Schiller, 1979) between employers and the Government (Raimbault and Saussois, 1981).

The Government's agenda, supported by the employers, and opposition proposals were contrasting. The 1978 Rapport sur l'Adaptation du 7e Plan openly set the priorities:

"Employment is linked to growth. Growth is linked to the balance of payment which in turn is linked to the adaptation of our industry." (1978:9)

A successful fight against inflation and a large industrial redeployment plan could lead to improved employment perspectives. The end of the Keynesian era (Le Monde, 19.2.1976:1) was sanctioned by the prevailing neo-liberal and market-oriented attitude, well aired by PM Barre. As for training the Government position was

summarised in 1978 by Mr Legendre, Minister of Employment:

"The Employment Plan has to be placed in the context of a larger policy approach. This includes a Government programme leading to establishing an economic system less based on Government action. Changes introduced in some measures were inspired by this position. There is undoubtedly room for alternating training for school leavers. This training could include work experience stages for young people in schools (under the control of schools authorities) and training stages for young people without a work contract. In this case training contents may be defined by employers or by others as it is in the case of apprenticeship contracts". (Le Monde, 19.5.1978:2)

Completely contrasting views were held by the political opposition both about economic perspectives and training developments. The Government's policy came under severe criticism; unemployment was presented as the main problem during the Seventh Plan ("problème aigue pour toute la periode du VII plan") and the underemployment as a long-standing feature of the French economy in the years to come (Le Monde, 25.6.1978:1). Both the Socialist and the Communist parties came out with wide-ranging proposals for education and training, based on global school reforms.(24)

In France there has been no "great debate" about education and training, nor a social contract; controversial views were in the policy arena and compromise was unlikely. PM Barre had the support of employers and the Government's decisions on youth unemployment were very similar to the CNPF proposals (Rose, 1980:50-51). The difficulties in the unity of the left in a period described as the "calvaire de la gauche" (calvary of the left) (Baudrillard, 1985) reduced the impact of political opposition without reducing the confrontation.

4.2 Employers

Rose (1980) has pointed out that employers and particularly their main association - CNPF - played an active role in the setting up of the National Pactes. Reasons for such an active attitude on the part of employers and for such an 'alliance' lie in the CNPF policy (Bunel and Saglio, 1985), in the political salience of youth measures, and in the nature of training.

In the early 1970's there was a change in the political strategy of employers.(25) Under the chairmanship of Mr Ceyrac the CNPF acted on the political scene as a pressure group putting forwards ideas and plans for the solution of several problems and with particular attention to public opinion. Reynaud has noted this change and its implications for the policy process:

"By stating their position about social policy, employers did not defuse conflicts that arise in France more than elsewhere. They did not modify the praxis and theory of trade unions: by way of contrast, after 1968 there is a trend towards a new extremism and a radical hope of change. However, by agreeing to discuss and by finding out some common ground, employers have become reliable partners, because more realistic and action takers. They may try to persuade public opinion with some chance of success that they have something to propose."(Reynaud, 1975:62)

From this perspective employers became interested and involved in the "gestion du non-emploi" (management of unemployment) (26); moreover they abandoned their traditional prudence and caution in their relationship with political parties (Bunel and Saglio, 1985:316) for the 1973 and 1978 general elections. A great mobilisation was launched in the election period. A national day for

employment was launched and 120 "délégués des entreprises pour l'emploi" (firms' representatives for employment) were set up in order to promote and coordinate employers' policy all over the country.(27) In 1975 Mr Chotard, chairman of the social committee of the CNPF, voiced the employers' attitude:

"We have decided to ask employers to employ from now the young they will need later. It is necessary to anticipate the future expansion. We are ready to give our support for the employment-training contracts Government has work out".(Le Monde, 4 June 1975:35)

As far as training is directly concerned, the involvement of employers was well rooted in the organisation and working of the "formation permanente" (Besnard and Lietard, 1976) which was seen as an enlargement of employers' control over training (De Maupeou-Abboud, 1980: 72). Employers' interest in training was based on the funding system including a compulsory contribution by employers and on the existence of several training bodies linked to employers.

A more structural reason for this active support by employers lies in the nature of vocational training itself. The youth schemes may be seen as instruments for a political management of unemployment. However, they deeply affected the working of the youth labour market (Rose, 1980:63-4). Many surveys have been carried out in order to analyse the "insertion professionnelle des jeunes". In taking into consideration some of the results of these studies it is necessary to stress that in the youth schemes young people with basic training qualifications were significantly more numerous than were others. It means that the youth schemes modified the way in which people enter the world of work. While first priority was given in policy presentation to the improvement of the "employability" of young people

without basic qualifications, there are elements for arguing that they put the already employable young people in a special recruitment procedure. That is why, at the end of the first pact, employers proved to be satisfied. In his report to the 1979 CNPF congress Mr Chotard claimed that the first pact:

"...has allowed employers to adjust training to their needs and to shorten the time spent by a young person before getting a job requiring a certain skill and qualification".(28)

A final aspect to be considered is the actual attitude of employers. There was a high degree of differentiation in the use of the youth measures. While the big firms (carmakers, textiles) extensively used the employment and training contracts, the traditional sectors accustomed to the apprenticeship system took the opportunity for special exemptions. Small firms were mainly in favour of practical stages.

7.4.3 Trade Unions: between Opposition and Consensus

A proper account of trade unions' attitudes and actions in this area has to take into consideration the structure and the nature of French trade unionism, i.e. to bear in mind its dual reality: "syndicalisme libertaire ou anarcho-syndicalisme" and, in the early 1970's, changes towards concerted action and negotiation with employers and the Government.

This led to an ever-changing attitude which swung from opposition to involvement, both in general policy and, more particularly, in education and training policies; when the different components of French trade unionism are taken into consideration changes appear to have been numerous (29).

In this section some issues which proved to be very divisive are identified. First, political opposition to Government policy led trade unions to develop criticism towards Mr Barre's economic policy and to propose alternative programmes of action. According to the trade unions' point of view the real policy ("vraie politique") pursued by the Government with the "action jeunes" was for a flexible manpower ("une main-d'oeuvre juvenile malleable"), exploiting the young, for a narrow training ("formation generale mutilée", "formation professionnelle étroite et utilitariste") and for a cosmetic action ("operation psychogiste") (Piettre and Schiller, 1979:35). The alternative plans openly contrasted with the Government policy. The plan compiled by the CGT was based on a different economic policy. It called for a relaunch of the "consommation interieure", and proposed alternative measures such as shortening of working hours and early retirement (CGT, 1976:129). In the CFDT plan for work, issued in 1977, priority status was assigned to "defend workers' interests and in broader terms "contribute to the creation of a self-managed socialist society" (CFDT, 1977). Mr Maire, general secretary to the CFDT, gave this view in an interview:

"The fight against inflation requires a concerted reduction of inequalities... It is not possible to be satisfied with some expedients such as employment and training contracts". (Le Monde, 24.8.1976: 1;19)

The remedies were the fight for the reduction of working hours, the improvement of working conditions and the employment of the workers required. In this context the role of trade unions came to be one of "contre-information"; it was necessary, according to left wing unionists and politicians, a large initiative of "demystification" (Le Peuple, 1031; 16-28 February 1978:6).

This controversial attitude and the political alignment made it difficult for trade unions to participate and to be involved in the consultative process. In the Spring of 1976, the CGT and the CFDT stopped their participation in the working groups for the VII Plan (Green, 1978:71-72) and withdrew their representatives from the Planning Commission because of a "deceitful consultation". (30) At the same time there was not enough time and room for consultation about the special measures to be taken; the Government did not consider such a consultation necessary. The CGT proposed a consultation in order to set a tripartite negotiation without success (CGT, 1976:131). The CFDT delegation to Mr Giscard d'Estaing called for a consultation with trade unions noting that:

"Till today, trade unions, in this country, are not really considered as partners".
(Syndicalisme CFDT Hebdo, 1698, 30.3.1978:5)

The political space for trade union actions was gradually reduced. Excluded from consultation, forced to the opposition for political alignment, the trade unions had to design their strategy in relation to the youth issue. Youth mobilisation and youth assistance were the lines of action that, with the political opposition, became dominant in the second half of the 1970's. The CGT and the CFDT, with the support of youth organisations launched mass demonstrations in 1975; on 11th March 1976 the CGT organised in Paris "les Etats generaux des jeunes pour l'emploi" (youth general assembly for employment).

Paradoxically, the relative success of the schemes and their persistence posed a serious problem for trade unions: they could no longer remain on the side of the opposition. A less controversial strategy was designed: trade unions called for an improvement in the youth measures. Trade unions requested for the young a real wage, a real training (i.e. leading to a recognised

certificate) and a guaranteed job. At the same time making trainees more aware as well as supporting the "comités des stagiaires" (committees of trainees) were lines of actions. Making the most out of the present situation was the latent attitude of trade unions. A negative message would not be acceptable; it was better to contact the trainees and help them.

"Trade unions must be near them, explain to them the aims of the Government's measures concerning them. Trade unions have to develop several initiatives in order to obtain permanent employment for young people and, at the same time, an immediate improvement of their employment situation...". (Le Peuple, 1031; 16-28.2.1978:6)

A new action was developed:

"It is already time to end the ill-planned training stages and their ill-defined status. As many factors lead us to think that the 'parking' of young people will be institutionalised, the only reaction is a permanent fight in co-operation with trade unions that will guarantee the link among successive flows of young people under training". (Syndicalisme CFDT Hebdo, 1698 30 March 1978)

As employers found in the youth schemes potential ways of making more flexible use of the youth labour force, trade unions opposed the special measures throughout the entire period. It was clear that the main issue was the control of training; this had been ascertained since the first set of measures. In 1975 a CGT criticism towards the "stages Granet" was based on this basic issue:

"They do not deal at all with the crucial question concerning the right and guarantee to work... They concern a small number of young people and moreover we have to say that AFPA has only 7,000 places and the education system a few hundred. Who will provide that pre-training? Employers will have the possibility of using, as they prefer, cheap labour and the time spent in the factory will be organised by

employers and public officials (Préfets) without any consultation or control by trade unions". (Le Peuple, organe officiel bimensuel de la CGT, 960 (1975):12.)

In more ideological terms the question is formulated by Piettre and Schiller:

"We may ask if this is not a new way of managing the reserve army in advanced capitalist countries". (1979:106)

After 1981 the political situation changed and youth training again became an area for consultation and negotiation.

7.5 THE ADMINISTRATIVE SET-UP

The richness and the variety of the initiatives promoted in the area of youth training seem to contrast with the assumed bureaucratic feature of French society and the succession and termination of schemes may appear not in line with a Cartesian France. These, however, are surface views and a more acute analysis is required. Vocational training for facilitating the "insertion professionnelle" was a newly-born sector placed between initial training in schools and continuing education (Viala, 1979:122). From the point of view of the administrative instruments, the adopted solutions were far from a school pattern (Garraud, 1985) and well rooted in the existing administration.

Four relevant features of the French administration have to be taken into account. First, the bureaucratic state tradition is one of the oldest in France. In his comparative study of Government systems in Europe Riddley

notes the peculiarity of France in these terms:

"Throughout Western Europe the role of the state has expanded vastly during the twentieth century. In France, however, this growth has caused neither the surprise nor the antagonism it has engendered elsewhere, and in part this reflects the tradition of the French state playing a large, dynamic role in society". (1979:68)

Second, vocational training is an area where there is no strong central bureaucratic unit. The Ministry of Vocational Training has a basic inter-ministerial structure. Moreover, the Ministry of Employment was, for a long time, in a comparatively weak position despite the fact that its budget increased greatly in the period 1976-1980 (moving from 1.3% of the State budget in 1973 to 3.5% in 1980).(31) It was not in any position to influence other departments. Join-Lambert notes:

"A tradition, unfortunately still alive in France, has led the Department of Employment to a secondary role without any real impact upon decisions taken by other Departments". (Join-Lambert, 1978:292)

Third, by considering more recent developments it is important not to forget a change that opened up a new and important avenue of innovation in French public administration, i.e. the creation of "small, dynamic, single-goal administrative agencies outside the traditional ministerial structure" (Ridley, 1979:84). This process took place mainly in the second half of the 1960's. Behind a façade of State unity and central power, the effective power of the administrative branches of the State was, to a certain extent, fragmented and dispersed among networks of organisations.

Fourth, it is necessary to bear in mind that the "formation continue" was the nest of "action jeunes"; the organisational, financial and functional framework of the

youth schemes were the same as those of continuing training, i.e. state action, public financial support and contributions by employers, an open market without any monopoly by the Ministry of Education and Employment.

Taking into account these four aspects, three relevant issues in the administration of the schemes will be discussed: a) the mobilisation effect of a policy designed as a framework for action; b) administrative continuity and the reorientation according to changing general goals; c) flexibility and non-uniformity of patterns of action ("pas une seule formule").

a) The Administration of the Schemes

The "Pactes nationaux pour l'emploi" have constituted a large effort on the part of the Government. However, they did not emerge as reform of the education and training system. Nor were they administered by a central body. Nor they lead to the creation of new administrative units or bodies. As a framework, they included avenues of potential initiative, they made resources available for initiatives, and they fixed the global aims pursued throughout the schemes. Although not always explicitly stated, quantitative targets were set up and the results, in this respect, were satisfying. The role of the Government was mainly a role of "incitateur" (Durand, Durand and Vervaeke, 1985:261ff; Garraud, 1985:688); mobilisation, facilitation, project planning and setting, incitation were the basic processes in the implementation phase.

The actual setting up of an employment and training contract or of a practical stage in a firm and the management of these required a convergence of interests and the participation of a plurality of actors: young people, employers and trainers. They required a set of conditions, mechanisms and procedures. The actual working

of the schemes was based on the attitudes of actors and on the suitability of different formulae in conveying sectoral interests. The core of the implementation process, given the conditions set up by the "pactes" was the small scale interaction among young people, employers and trainers. De-Maupeou-Abboud in her article focuses on "une série de micro-systèmes d'interaction et de décision" (a series of microsystems of interaction and décision) (1980:71). Paul (1984:41) focuses on the synergy between employers and training bodies in developing the idea of alternance.

This small scale interaction took place in a context of 'open market'; no institution had a monopoly in providing training. The situation was characterised by both a formal and an informal structure. The former included the bureaucratic machinery at the national and regional levels; the latter, the training bodies. The "marché de la formation" (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:67) had included private and public bodies since the launch of the "formation continue". With the decrease in resources for "formation continue", due to the economic crisis, private bodies (over a thousand) encountered growing difficulties. In 1975 Mr Granet, Secretary of State for vocational training, recognised that one third of the training bodies are in danger (L'Express, 6-12 janvier 1975:31). That is the reason why, from the perspective of a use of existing mechanisms the youth schemes were "une manne inespérée" (an unexpected gift) (Pieltre and Schiller, 1975:39). As a result, the provision of training was highly diversified; the global picture was very far from a school-model of training. First of all, the amount of potential provision was very high. Legave and Vignaud (1982:67) talk of 400 public bodies (GRETA), 125 training centres belonging to the AFPA, 200 training centres associated with ASFO, 200 linked to the Chambers of Commerce and over a thousand

private bodies. This apparatus and institutional structure affected the policy and opposed the centralised structure of the initial training in schools (Gehin, 1984; 1985).

b) The Support System

It is surprising in an assumed monolithic structure to see all the many agencies and collateral bodies that constituted a type of support system for the youth training policy. The Government's policy was geared to improving the performance of these bodies in response to political priorities. This took place at several levels. The ANPE (Agence National pour l'Emploi), created in 1967 in a period of growth (Viala, 1979:136; Mouriaux and Mouriaux, 1984:151) under the strains of unemployment was improved, and increased its budget, the number of local agencies, and personnel.

The Association National pour la Formation des Adultes (AFPA), a public body since 1946, became a major policy instrument of the Ministry of Employment. The AFPA provided "stages de formation" for the young. The ONISEP was mobilised for career guidance. The prestigious body created for the "formation continue", the Agence pour le development de l'Education Permanente (ADEP), became deeply involved in youth training. In 1977 Mr Begue, director of the Agency, put "the state of art" in these words:

"The employment situation has greatly changed; as a consequence policy priorities have been modified. ADEP has to adjust to this situation. It has to face the following problem: for the young, a passable job, for the adult a multiple qualification making professional mobility possible. ADEP is ready to carry out studies and pilot schemes. A few proposals in this direction have already been advanced by ADEP". (Actualite de la Formation Permanente, 27 Mars-April, 1977:33).

The Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur le Qualifications, CEREQ, created in 1970, financed by the Ministries of Education and Employment, carried out regular surveys in the second half of the 1970's, concerning the "insertion professionnelle des jeunes". In 1976 it set up an information system on transition from school to work. In cooperation with the INSEE, CEREQ produced the "Bilans formation-emploi" in 1974, 1977 and in 1980 (Affichard and Amat, F., 1984). This network of bodies guaranteed continuity in conditions of instability.

c) A variety of solutions

The third aspect which must be considered concerns the repertoire of policy measures which was created in the course of the period under investigation. Youth schemes did not introduce an overall training reform; they were developed according to an incrementalist approach (Amat, 1985); and through a process of "learning by doing" and by successive adjustments.

This did not prevent a sort of invisible line of continuity behind the succession of schemes. In the early 1970's small scale experiments provided the basis for the "50,000 jeunes operation" launched in 1976 - initiatives that could be seen as the antecedents of the national pacts. This succession of measures provided a satisfactory level of flexibility; it was possible to adjust the pattern according to the different political scenes and debates. Programmes of practical experience in firms came, for example, under severe criticism (Luttringer, 1977) and were abandoned and not included in the "Plan avenir jeunes" (1982). Others were modified or reformulated ("contrat de qualification", "contrat d'insertion") in a more appealing vocabulary. In the long run, apprenticeship and employment and training contracts were the more consistent schemes; the "stages" helped in

diminishing the level of unemployment among the young (Pate et al., 1980:25). At the same time a diversification and a stabilisation of some measures were possible; the community programmes were introduced; the "alternance" was a conceptual cloud for a set of already experienced schemes.

From a general point of view, there was an awareness of being in an innovative area. The general atmosphere among the practitioners and decision makers was that of a creative period. Among experts it was a common view that alternatives were essential and experimenting was necessary. In a technical report about employment and training, compiled in 1976 for the Planning Commission, the core of the required initiative was clearly identified in the management of the transition and, at the same time the existing uncertainty was pointed out:

"These measures, integrative and diversified, applicable according to the situations, are still in an experimental phase. They are given in order to illustrate a problem and point out solution such as alternating training. In this area and particularly for the 16-18 age group, the challenge to the education system is to modify habits and traditions, although no well-established diagnosis support a unique solution". (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1976a:96)

Undoubtedly, a piecemeal approach was a necessity; no one-way solution was identifiable and no single solution was politically plausible. In the succession, termination and reorientation of several schemes, their presentation and meaning did change. This was one of the crucial aspects of the administration of the schemes - an example of a policy by programme.

As a result of the those three aspects discussed above implementation structures were dispersed and scattered. There was no national collective agreement, nor a top-

down line of implementation. In general terms, this may conflict with some monolithic images of the French state; however, it confirms more recent assessments of the French policy style. As Dupuy and Thoenig (1985) say:

"Administrative bodies work inside complex systems. Collective problems are not dealt with only by administrative bodies: there are several actors involved, belonging to various fields (national and local). All together they build up a network that we call a system. These networks function as filters through which the administration deals with problems". (1985:286)

7.6 TOWARDS A NEW TRAINING DEAL FOR THE YOUTH

The plethora of overlapping measures covering a large age-group (16-26) and various types of training was the result of a long-term process which was not without antecedents. Training, as a conjunctural measure, was already present in 1971. In an official document of the Planning Commission it was acknowledged that, with rising youth unemployment:

"More and more, periods out of work will be viewed as time for training, in order to have better opportunities for jobs. Vocational training will then appear as a necessary means for the manpower policy authority". (Commissariat Général du Plan, 1971:41)

In the early 1970's, when symptoms of difficulties appeared, a few measures were discussed (Ministère du Travail, 1973; Le Monde de l'éducation, 1975:41). The Employment Pacts had several in-depth bearings. The effort conducted from 1975 to 1981 was a remarkable one: it presents several dimensions and it had long-term implications.

First, it is important to point out that, as has been discussed above, youth schemes fitted into a specific Government policy. The basic imperative that sustained the search for action has been identified, although with some differences, as "aménager la période de transition". (to manage the transition). It was not a plain development, but was a sudden effort and a shock therapy. The hidden contents may be seen in the light of placebo policies (Casey, 1983:109) - a common pattern among decision makers under strain and pressure. In 1981 Mr Barre summarised this policy in this way:

"Policy pursued in the last four years did not intend, as it has been said several times with obstinacy and bad faith, to chose money against employment, economic balance against worker welfare. It has been a policy for employment; it has managed to avoid social explosion. It has aimed at governing the most difficult situation and at improving the situation of the young that has always been considered as a priority". (Barre, 1981:54)

Under the cover of an attempt to deal with youth unemployment and its political risks some undercurrent changes took place and some developments were facilitated. This affected general perspectives in the consideration of training affairs. The crisis atmosphere made an "economist" view of education and training more acceptable. After a period where educational ideologies had been dominant in training ("formation permanente" as a personal right and conceived in terms of personal development) vocationalism became dominant. The solution was not envisaged in new overall plans, but in flexible and temporary measures. The lack of a functional relationship between school and the economy and the presence of 'overeducation' (Vincens, 1976) could not be faced with long-term plan: the need for adjustment was perceived. The situation appeared somewhat confused during the forging and launching of special schemes.

Viala recognises this:

"The training system reveals some structural weakness. Each contingent measure has its own limits; moreover the excessive costs of the youth measures prevent, at the moment and under the present circumstances, any attempt to systematise them". (Viala, 1979:140)

In addition to the political setting and the ideology of training, it is necessary to refer to the change in the culture of the young. Rousselet, a psychologist and author of several pieces of research which influenced current views and scientific advisor to national bodies, launched his voice of alarm:

"Young people reproduce the values and job expectations of their social classes. Nevertheless part of this social and cultural heritage seems to be rejected, that is, the work ethic, the moral value given to work by the former generation". (Rousselet, Balazs and Mathey, 1975:15)

The cultural maladjustment of the youth, the "allergie au travail" (allergy to work) and the need for a renewed "work ethic" and a reconsideration of manual work were themes discussed in relation to such cultural dynamics (Projet, No special, 115 Mai "Jeunes" 1977; Sartin, 1977; Le Mouel, 1981) and constituted a new youth ideology. This accounted for a diffuse awareness of the situation and its risks for the young generation; several of these themes were subsequently revisited in the Schwartz report (Schwartz, 1982:8ff).

As has been discussed, one of the main political issues was the need for a short-term and immediate response to the challenge of youth unemployment. However, the gradual process of "learning by doing", the progressive enlargement of the measures, and the increase in the number of young people involved gave birth to long-term perspectives; the persistence of unemployment

and of the related political pressures helped to sustain these views. Among experts and politicians the most successful measures, such as the employment and training contracts, were rated as permanent solutions. Professor Vincens commented:

"We may see recent employment and training contracts as a way of reducing temporarily youth unemployment: but, if experiments are continued and developed, they may appear as the skeleton of an original and effective formula in order to deal with the transition".

In an official document of the Ministry of Employment in 1981 the employment and training contract was considered as a permanent way of transition from school to work (Ministère du Travail, 1981:16).

The stabilisation of temporary measures shows the consistence of some aspects related to the schemes. First of all, the reasons for the feasibility and for the success of such measures as the employment and training contract and the practical "stages" were not contingent. It became evident that training without any formal link with the firms (based more on the traditional school pattern) could not lead to a successful scheme and, at the same time, practical experience in firms without formal training was not politically acceptable. Although practical stages were successful in providing employment (Ministère du Travail, 1981:24) they faced opposition and criticism from trade unions and left-wing parties. The training "stages" did not significantly affect the "insertion professionnelle" (Rose, 1980:60). The programme combining formal training and practical experience included those ingredients which were more successful in terms of providing a job for the young and more plausible from a political point of view.

A second source of stability was the achieved change in the balance between vocational and general education.

In a school centred system of training, criticism concerning the gap between school and firms is bound to develop. The ideology of "alternance"(32) aimed at counteracting the open criticism of the isolation of schools from the work world (Reubens, 1982:68). This was not only a paedagogical change; it affected the role of policy actors. Employers saw the youth measures as a way of operating this change of balance and of adjusting the vocational education provided by schools. Mr Ceyrac, at the CNPF congress in 1979, claimed that the employment and training contract had to be seen as:

"A solution for permanently adjusting basic education provided by the education system to the ever-changing situation in firms. They link work experience and training. They provide short-term training, adjusting training and further training".(Rose, 1980:59)

The third aspect which accounted for making the measures into permanent solutions is related to the mechanisms and procedures of recruitment of young people. Pate, Bez, Koepp and Tardieu in their survey maintain that the several measures did not modify the overall criteria for the recruitment of young people (1980:30); the variety, however, of alternative solutions made possible a diversification according to the individual needs and customs of individual economic sectors or types of firms. Some branches used the mesures systematically; others ignored one in favour of another more suitable measure. Apprenticeship remained in its traditional sector. The set of measures were, from this point of view, well adequate to the existing diversified patterns of recruitment. (33)Any imposed unique solution could not have been acceptable; the approach was workable and stable.

In this process of developing new measures, the reference to other countries was relevant.(34) The

diversity between the French system and the West German system had been highlighted by research work carried out by Maurice and Sellier (1979) and echoed in international reports (European Centre, 1979; Kraiss, 1979). A diffuse awareness of the contemporary developments in other western countries was promoted by INFFO which was responsible for a regular exchange of information (De Maupeou-Abboud, 1985). The differences were well known. In 1976 Giraud (1976:18) noted that there was a difference between the United Kingdom and France (British employers bear larger responsibility; the approach is more pragmatic, less systematic and less diversified). At the same time this author singled out a common aspect, i.e. temporary and experimental solutions taken to counteract structural deficiencies become permanent measures. The contribution by French experts to the EC policy on alternance is beyond the scope of this thesis.

A policy is a multi-level process incorporating several logics of action. At the political level, interests in training were laid out according to the political alignment; this affected the political orientation and the political vocabulary in which training issues were dealt with (35). In the subsequent years a different political context provided new sources of rationality; in the Schwartz report (Schwartz, 1982) the youth schemes are placed in a broader context of social policy. At the structural level, the measures had to match the existing setting; placed outside the school system, facilitated by a reorientation of the "formation permanente", they succeeded to the extent that they met employers' needs and demands. At the ideological level, a new atmosphere was created in line with the tradition of innovation and with educational philosophy (36).

The first level touched upon political arrangements; the second is entangled in the societal setting; the

third is linked to a type of "invisible college". Continuity may be seen independently at each of these levels. Plan avenir jeunes (1982) and Plan d'insertion professionnelle et sociale des jeunes de 16 to 25 ans (the ambitious schemes of the Socialist Government) bear testimony to a continuity in a different political setting.

7.7 CONCLUSION

While studying youth training schemes adopted in some European Countries in the 1970's, the relevance of the "actions jeunes" goes beyond their quantitative achievement. First, French youth schemes, as in the United Kingdom and in Italy, have proved to be a useful focus for investigating the making of training policies. We cannot disagree with De Maupeou-Abboud when she notes the salience of the youth programmes in revealing how policies are defined and implemented. In her article about the employers' policy in the area of training, she recognises:

"Youth measures are particularly interesting in relation to our approach: they intend to train young people without initial qualifications without taking into account the existing basic training provision. They were set up in order to fight against the underemployment of young people and to give local employers a labour force suitable for their new needs. They have been inspired by people, some of them from the firms, willing to innovate in the field of training. They are at the crossway of convergent actions and, then, unveiling much more the substance of training policies, in their full meaning, than institutional procedures providing for the mechanical reproduction of types of jobs, already existing and classified". (1980:175)

Second, the youth schemes investigated in this chapter, were initiated at the beginning of a long-term change in post-initial youth training (Meriaux, 1984). It is surprising to find in the Schwartz Report (Schwartz, 1982) which provided a broad political rationality for a plethora of schemes, an explicit presentation of a French "youth guarantee". Among the main aims of the youth plan Mr Schwartz includes:

"Ensure that all young people from 16 to 18 can obtain a vocational and social qualification... Ensure that no more young people aged 16 to 18 are out of work, by offering them a new type of training that will give them a qualification. No young person will enter working life without having been offered vocational and social training". (1982:77)

The development of this post-initial training took place in a particular political culture and was presented with a political vocabulary different from that used in other countries. This Chapter started with three types of issues: a) the policy context; b) the map of interests; c) the policy contents. In relation to these there are three sets of conclusions.

First, the strategic management of impoverishment (Hayward, 1982) and the decision taken in the economic area were the main contextual components. They provided the necessary impetus to action; moreover, they created facilitating conditions and forged imperatives of action. Political alignment led to an emphasis on the policy conflict. After the socialist party took office, inter-trade agreements and concertation again became current procedures - as they had been in the early 1970's.

Second, although training was largely seen as an appropriate measure - a sort of panacea for economic and social phenomena - differences in the interest configuration suddenly appeared. The "champ politique de

la formation" (the training policy sector) (de Maupeou-Abboud, 1980:173) was structured around two basic issues: the working of the labour market with particular reference to the employers' strategy and the administration of training. Behind a succession of partial and sectoral measures for young people a "dispositif spécifique de gestion de la transition professionnelle" (a instrument for the management of the transition). The way in which young people enter the world of work was altered. The substantial weakness of the centre (Crozier, 225) led to the crucial role of a network of organisations.

Third, the quest for a flexible, changeable way of moving from school to work determined the basic policy content. The concept of vocationalism provided a working framework for accommodating opposing interests and interests from different origins (e.g. educationists).

Here lies the basis for continuity (Meriaux, 1984) of policy. The political context changed from Mr Barre to the Socialist Government; however, the same measures remained almost unaltered. Their presentation and political rationality was modified. But the policy machinery, the set of public and private training bodies, the programmes designed and implemented continued to be the basic structure of the subsequent initiatives.

NOTES

(1) The two more common words used in French are "formation" and "education". While "education" can be translated with the English word "education", "formation" has no English correspondent term because both vocational education and training seem to be inadequate. In French the two terms may be seen as synonymous. In his glossary Werner recognises that "Although there is a distinction between the two terms, 'education' and 'formation', they are used interchangeably" (1974:91). Mialaret points out that the word "formation" has acquired a very broad meaning in the French context (1979:231-32). With reference to the French context we use 'vocational training' for "formation" including:

- (a) Vocational education in schools (short and long cycle of technical education (in French "Lycée d'enseignement technologique" and "Lycée d'enseignement professionnelle)
- (b) Further training and retraining.
- (c) Apprenticeship.

See Chapter One:Sect.1.1, for the definition of vocational training.

(2) In French "action jeunes" indicates the range of measures taken by the Government for young people in the framework of the responses to youth unemployment. Our focus is, above all, upon the training measures, i.e. the employment and training contracts ("contrats de formation et travail") and the work experience programmes ("stages pratiques en entreprise"). We limit our investigation to the second half of the 1970's.

(3) See Appendix One, for the sources of data.

(4) Apprenticeship in France did not develop as in other European countries mainly for historical reasons. It remained marginal and was gradually shaped from the 1919 ("Loi Astier" 29 July 1919), to 1925 when the apprenticeship tax ("taxe d'apprentissage") was introduced, to 1928 when a written contract was required, to 1938 when vocational courses became compulsory and to 1973 when work experience ("pre-apprentissage") in the last two years of the compulsory schooling was introduced ("Loi Royer"). See Boubli (1976); Legave and Vignaud (1982) for an overview of the apprenticeship system.

(5) In France the system of school qualifications correspond to the categories of jobs. The basic qualifications are:

- (a) CEP ("Certificat d'études professionnelles") and CAP ("Certificat d'aptitude professionnelle")
- (b) BEP ("Brevet d'études professionnelles")
- (c) BT ("Brevet de Technicien")

These qualifications correspond to the hierarchy in jobs; the groups of jobs are as follows:

I-II: Engineers, general managers...(with qualifications from the University or institutions of Higher Education, e.g. "Grandes Ecoles"); III: Technician (from post-secondary technical schools); IV: Technician (from long cycle of technical education in the secondary school); V: Skilled workers (from short cycle of technical education in the secondary school); VI: People without school qualification. See Legave and Vignaud (1982) for an overview.

(6) The legal framework was provided by two pieces of legislation passed in 1971 ("Loi n.71-575 du 16 Juillet 1971 portant organisation de la formation professionnelle continue dans le cadre de l'éducation permanente, Journal Officiel, 103 n.164 (17 July 1971):7035-7041") and "Loi n.71-578 du 16 juillet 1971 sur la participation des employeurs au financement des premières formations technologiques et professionnelles, Journal Officiel, 103, 164 (17 juillet 1971):7046-7047". In 1970 an agreement was reached between trade unions and employers about further education and training ("Accord national interprofessionnel du 9 juillet 1970 sur la formation et le perfectionnement professionnels" Liaisons sociales, Legislation sociale, 3651 (10 July 1970):1-10). This agreement was supplemented by an additional one in 1976 and a new Act was passed on 17 July 1978.

(7) Employers may choose the way in which they may discharge this obligation among the following options:

- a) by financing training programmes, either within the firm or outside in public or private training centres;
- b) by paying trainees' wages;
- c) by making a contribution to training insurance funds ("Fond d'Assurance Formation" - FAF) set up by an agreement concluded between employers' organisations and trade unions. The 1976 Act (16 July 1976) provided for a part (0.2 per cent of the payroll) of this compulsory contribution by employers to be allocated for the training of first-time job-seekers. If the total funds allocated by the employer prove to be lower than the fixed percentage, the employer must pay the difference to the public treasury. This financial mechanism (Legave and Vignaud, 1982) differs from the levy-system introduced in 1964 in the United Kingdom from two point of view: first, it is not based on economic sectors, second it is a national obligation towards the state.

(8) The network of institutions providing training includes (Legave and Vignaud, 1982:64ff.): technical schools (LEP), association of schools (GRETA), Politechnics (IUT), University Departments, public and private training organisations (AFPA and ASF0) and other institutions ("Chambres de Commerce et de Industrie, Chambre des Metiers").

(9) The 1966 Act (3 December 1966) provided for the vocational training of adults; this act is seen as a formal commitment by the State to vocational training. On the basis of this Act, the "Conseil National de la Formation Professionnelle" (inter-departmental committee on vocational training) was set up.

(10) See Hayward (1981) about the "Commissariat Generale du Plan" (National Planning Commission).

(11) See Legave and Vignaud (1982), for the administrative structure. A reallocation of ministerial responsibilities took place in 1983 (OECD, 1984b:76).

(12) See Schwartz (1973) as an example of the contribution by French educationists to the development of perspectives on education.

(13) See Chapter Six:Sect.6.2.1 for a comparison with the process of definition of the youth unemployment issue in Italy.

(14) This myopia, whether intended or not, was consistently held. Interviewed in 1975 Mr Durafour claimed that: "Nothing forces us to believe that unemployment will increase in the next years." (Le Monde, 11 April 1975).

(15) "Debate on Employment Problems" (27 May 1975), Journal Officiel, Debats Parlementaires, 41 A.N. Mercredi 28 Mai 1975.

(16) The importance of the election is confirmed by the fact that the diminished electoral pressure led to a reduction in the scale of the second Pact (only 275,037 young people against 552,551 of the first. (Ministère du Travail, 1981:18).

(17) See Le Monde, 18.19.20.21.22 March 1975 ("Cinquacent mille jeunes en quête d'emploi"); Le Monde, 8.9.17 January 1976.

(18) We include in the manpower policy the following aspects: unemployment benefits ("indemnisation du chômage"), early retirement, job maintaining, job creation, vocational training (Ministère de

l'Emploi, 1982:11-12). Unemployment benefits and vocational training were the two main components accounting for 50 per cent the first and 30 per cent the second of the total resources (Ministere de l'Emploi, 1982).

(19) From a cross-national point of view, the period of work experience ("stages pratiques en entreprise") are similar to the Work Experience Programme in the United Kingdom, while the employment and training contracts have equivalent in Italy. See Casey and Bruche, 1985:48.

(20) Quantitative data provided in this section are from Ministere du Travail (1981:18). Data for the Third Pact relates to two periods (1 July 1979-30 June 1980 and 1 July 1980-30 July 1981).

(21) See Chapter Six:Sect.6.4 for a comparison with the employment and training contract in Italy.

(22) For all the measures we are considering there were legal bases; and all the successive modifications had to be supported by pieces of legislation. See as an example the decree establishing the employment and training contracts ("Decree n.35-437 du 4 juin 1975 instituant un contrat d'emploi-formation", Journal Officiel, 5 June 1975:5637.

(23) Apprenticeships grew from 154.000 (1974-75) to 208.000 in 1978-1979, to 225.000 in 1982-83 (INSEE, Ann. Statistique de la France, 1980:136; 1985:296).

(24) See Socialist Party, Libérer l'école: Plan socialiste pour l'éducation nationale, Paris: Ed. Flammarion, 1978; and Communist Party, "Etude pour la formation professionnelle" in L'école et la nation, 279-280 (February-March 1978):10-15. See also, Vincens (1978) for a comment of the position of the political parties on education and training issues.

(25) See Fourcade and Ricaud, 1979.

(26) See the report "Entreprises et la crise: pour une nouvelle approche", by a group of Employers ("Enterprise et Progrès").

(27) See "La politique de formation du CNPF", Actualité de la Formation Permanente, 26 (1976):75-79.

(28) Report by Y.Chotard to the CNPF Congress (Deauville, 1979.

(29) See Woodhall, 1986:435.

(30) CFDT Syndacalisme Hebdo, 1552, 12.6.1975:9.

(31) Le Monde, 14.2.1976; 9.3.1976. Piettre and Schiller, 1979:36.

(32) According to the principle of "alternance" (the legal basis is provided by the Act n.84 130, 24 February 1984 following an inter-trade agreement signed on 26 October 1983) only part of the training of young people should take place in schools, and it should be interspersed with and alternated with practical training in firms. Alternation was a dominant feature of apprenticeship (limited to a few sectors) and of the Employment Pacts; it was further developed by Schwartz (OECD, 1984b).

(33) From an evaluative report (Ministère du Travail, 1981:22) it appears that young people with qualification benefitted of the measures more than the others. By comparing the qualification level of the young involved in the special measures and the qualification level of the school leavers, young people at I and II levels counted for 10% of school leavers (1978) and only 0.5 (employment and working contracts), 3.4% (training courses) and 0.8 (practical training); by way of contrast, young people at the V level count for 38.0% of school leavers and 60.1% (employment and training contracts), 27.5 (training courses) and 48.7 (work experience).

(34) See "Les formations d'insertion professionnelle des jeunes en Europe. Journées internationales du Centre INFFO 16-17 Février 1978", in Actualité de la Formation Permanente, 34 May-June 1978:11-22; see also Dumont, J.P. "Une expérience originale au Canada", Le Monde, 5 March 1976:29.

(35) The Socialist Government in 1982 presented its "Plan Jeunes" as a "rupture" with the past. Mr Rigout, State Minister of Vocational Training, provided a critical view of previous actions ("astuce qui visait à englober un certain nombre de mesures anciennes et quelques nouvelles", "stages bidons", "stages parking", 1983:35-37).

(36) See Morin, 1976; Schwartz, 1973.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EC 'COMMON VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY' AND YOUTH TRAINING

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Policy research on the European Community has shown the inadequacy of grand theories about integration (Rosenthal, 1975; Wallace, Wallace and Webb, 1977; Hurtwitz, 1980) and has gradually come to concentrate on the analysis of policy-making in individual policy areas. In addition the importance of national Governments in EC policy-making and the interaction between European and national levels (Laffan, 1983) have been increasingly explored. Although there are no conclusive results, some questions such as the relationship between domestic politics and the EC policy system (Bush and Puchala, 1976; Bulmer, 1982) and policy implementation across national boundaries (Wallace, 1984) have been dealt with. As a result of these developments scholars have been more cautious in dealing with overall theories of EC policy-making. (Sargent, 1985)

Vocational training (1) is a marginal and weak area in EC policy-making. It is possible to list several policy documents (Groenig, 1982) concerning training, however there is a striking contrast between explicit and rhetorical presentation ('common vocational training policy') and actual results and between the complexity of the policy machinery (2) and the paucity of initiatives. A narrow perspective in considering the interrelationship between economic and social policies (Collins, 1975:253) and a lack of interest on the part of the national Governments are two of the reasons behind the uncertainty surrounding vocational training in EC policy and what has appeared, from the point of view of a European-minded observer, the failure (Wedell, 1982) of vocational

training to become a fully recognised and developed area in the EC policy process.

The aims of this chapter (see Chapter One:Sect.1.4) are: first, to explore, with reference to the EC, how vocational training, whose particularist bonds have been outlined in Chapter Two, can become an issue at the international level (3); second, to understand the policy process involved in the initiatives (and the lack of such initiatives) taken by the EC institutions as a response to youth unemployment in the 1970's; and third, to analyse how national particularism discussed in Chapter Three affects EC policies and how EC actions face diversity in national training systems (Johnson, 1987).

By taking into account research done on the EC and evidence from data gathered (4) for the purpose of this cross-national study, it is argued here that in the 1970's several strands of political pressure forced EC institutions to take action in favour of the unemployed youth, with particular emphasis on training-related initiatives. Structural constraints and a lack of political consensus among the Governments of the member countries prevented any major development being agreed about and carried out. The initiatives taken were, therefore, mainly based on the Commission's competences in policy initiation and execution. These initiatives bear testimony to the particular emphasis given to vocational training in the late 1970's (Wedell, 1982) and disclose some basic patterns of action by the EC in the policy sector being dealt with in this thesis. Policy processes (especially policy-making by subsidies; see Chapter Three:Sect.3.4) had become increasingly entangled and enmeshed with processes of "cognitive mobilisation" (Chapter Three:Sect.3.4): the former included bargaining, consensus building and decision-making, and the latter included the diffusion of ideas, the structuring of

available knowledge, the transferring of experience, the giving of advice and the channelling of information. Parallel action and co-operative learning appeared to be the two main political methods adopted in the face of national particularism. Both these methods guaranteed autonomy to the national systems, and did not directly affect national training arrangements; on the contrary, they tended to consolidate on-going national changes. In addition they fostered the development of a European perspective in the consideration of and discussion about training matters. Both these patterns of action led to a replacement of the ideological and supranational attitudes of the early 1960's in favour of a realistic and pragmatic approach. Recent policy documents (5) still indicate the persistence of supranationalism - the EC as a legitimate source of authority, which emanates principles and points out action to be taken. However, it is assumed here that this residual and surviving view of the EC role does not correspond to the actual outputs of the EC policy in the sector of vocational training.

This chapter is divided into five sections: the first is concerned with the historical change from the 1960's to the early 1970's in terms of a basic perspective about 'common vocational training policy' and its radical limits; the second and the third present the EC response and non-response to youth unemployment; the fourth illustrates the interrelationship of national and European policy-systems with particular reference to the United Kingdom; and the fifth outlines the fundamental rationales of EC action in the area of vocational training.

8.2 'COMMON VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY': ACTION AND INACTION

In the EC policy system there is no single uniform pattern of policy-making crossing several sectors (Rosenthal, 1975); however, general changes may affect individual areas, particularly where these areas are not fully institutionalised, depend on others and can be encapsulated in broader policy frameworks. Attitudes towards vocational training, an area at the edge of EC policy-making (6), were deeply influenced by modifications in EC policy. 'Common vocational training policy', as a grand aim in EC policy, acquired different meanings according to the current dominant philosophy about the development of the EC.

This section illustrates the different perspectives from which the action by the EC in the area of vocational training was viewed in the 1960's and 1970's; subsequently, political and structural factors that prevented major initiatives in this area are identified.

Several pieces of research have outlined the political change brought about in the 1970's and have viewed it as a move from supranationalism towards intergovernmentalism (Pinder, 1975; Webb, 1977; Taylor, 1982). (7) Definitions of action and its legitimation varied significantly from the 'first Europe' to the 'second Europe'. While during the 1960's the task was mainly to put into practice the institutional imperatives included in the Treaty of Rome, in the following decade the political agenda, discussed and agreed in its broad terms at successive Summits of European Prime Ministers, was the source of action. Shanks (1977) summarises this change as a move from a 'legal basis' to a 'political basis' for action.

Vocational training, unlike policies concerning social security and education, is explicitly mentioned in the Treaty of Rome (8); however, there is not a self-contained judicial framework for EC action in the area of vocational training. The legal bases have to be put together from various sections of the Treaty of Rome which established the European Economic Community. In the Treaty of Rome, articles 57, 118 and 128 provide the main judicial bases for action in the area of vocational training. The first entitles the European Council, on a proposal from the Commission, to "issue directives for the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other evidences of qualification" (Art. 57 para 1). The second includes the Commission's task of promoting "close co-operation between member states in the social field particularly in matter relating to... basic and advanced vocational training" (Art.118).(9) The third, more markedly, specifies the work to be done by EC institutions in these terms:

"The Council shall, on a proposal from the Commission and after the Economic and Social Committee has been consulted, lay down the general principles for carrying out a common policy of vocational training capable of contributing to the harmonious development of the economies both of individual States and of the Common Market." (Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, Rome 25 March 1957. Art. 128)

The establishment of the European Social Fund to promote employment and occupational mobility among workers within the EC and the principle of the "free movement of labour" (Articles 48; 49; 51) have indirect implications for vocational training.

The basic economic drive behind the setting up of the European Economic Community, the "laissez-faire" philosophy in vocational training policies which prevailed at the time (see Chapter Two: Sect.2.3) at the

national level (Shanks, 1977:1) and a widespread feeling that a spontaneous tendency (10) would lead to harmonisation (Collins, 1983:2) may help in an understanding of the historical reasons behind the marginality of vocational training in the original blueprint for the European Economic Community.

On the basis of article 128 of the Treaty, the European Commission in the early 1960's worked at laying down general principles for a common vocational training policy among the member countries. Ten general principles (11) were identified, included in a Council Decision (12) and presented in a conference of experts in 1964. The assumption, in accordance with a supranational view, was that the EC could and should give a practical lead to member states; comprehensive guidelines were expected to harmonise national policies within the EC. The ten general principles were formulated in terms so broad as to be largely unquestionable. As far as the content of the principles is concerned, basic statements (about the right of young people and adults to vocational training; links between training and labour markets needs and personal development; training for special groups of people) and procedural arrangements (setting up of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training) were included. No mention was made of the basic and controversial training issues (school-based versus industry-based patterns of vocational training; financing arrangements; status of the trainee) and no reference was made to the ESF as a policy instrument.

The assumption that the EC could act as a supranational authority proved to be fallacious and the principles were regarded, years later, as "good but rather vague intentions" (Kulakowski and Rachesa, 1975:2). EC officials themselves were very careful in balancing the imposition of rules and national autonomy.

Levi-Sandri, vice president of the European Commission, said in his opening speech of the 1964 Conference:

"The Treaty of Rome calls for a common policy in the field of vocational training. This does not mean that Member States have to accept common rules. A regulation for all, imposed by the authority, is not in line with the philosophy of the Treaty. What is important is that the States move towards a gradual harmonisation of the structures and of the systems of vocational training. This is highly desirable and may be achieved through exchange of experiences and information, common studies and co-operative initiatives." (EEC, 1964:12)

In addition the European Council did not agree on explicit proposals submitted by the Commission for the implementation of these principles (Kirchner, 1977:148) and the action taken by the Commission did not reach a high level of visibility. One example is provided by the action taken in the area of vocational guidance where the lack of interest by member states reflected their own low level of development in this field (13). The failure in taking action in the 1960's led to a gradual erosion of the initial enthusiasm and showed that the approach adopted was not congruent with the positions of national actors (Michelmann, 1978:226) and was out of touch with its policy environment. Harmonisation of vocational training came to be viewed as a long-term process; references to the 1963 Council Decision, remained, however, part of the ritualistic opening of most of documents on vocational training.

National Governments were not as active in this area; they were pursuing different policies and were aware of the difficulties and limits of EC action in this area (14). In 1972 a British delegation to the EC assessed the present situation in these realistic terms:

"The present position can be summed up as follows:

- (a) the structure of vocational training systems is the responsibility of individual member countries;
- (b) it is the policy of the Commission to concentrate on results rather than on methods;
- (c) there will be no harmonisation for its own sake, but only when it is needed." (Perry, 1972:11)

In a 1973 official report by CNEL (National Council for Economy and Labour) to the Italian Government about EC social policy, it is recognised that:

"In the field of vocational training, Community action has been noticeable for the documents issued and for the principles stated more than for initiatives taken. Moreover, the ten principles, agreed in 1963 and aiming at the harmonisation of training systems have not proved to be very effective. Even the preliminary measures for a common vocational training policy, under scrutiny of the Council at the moment, provide for actions, such as the exchange of information and documents, useful but not remarkable." (Saba, 1973:68)

The content of the 1971 General Guidelines for the Development of the Common Vocational Training Policy was minimal and reductive if compared with the grand principles stated in the early 1960's. (15)

In the 1970's several changes affected EC policy-making. First of all the role of the European Council and of meetings of national ministries increased and 'political co-operation' was the emerging policy pattern (Wallace and Allen, 1977:227). Moreover, after 1974 there was an organised trade union front at the European level (Roberts and Liebhaberg, 1976; Kirchner, 1977:33) and greater participation by social partners in the economic, social and political decisions by the Community was called for. The "second Europe", as this movement was called, brought about, at the level of policy debate, a substantial enlargement of the Community's scope of action. The Social Action Programme (1974-1976) and the

Action Programme in Education bear testimony to this change: both concern sectors for which little or no provision had been made by the Treaty of Rome (Shanks, 1977:5ff). At a time when the EC was running out of steam, the "Social Europe" (16) arose as "a new deal". The new identified tasks did not stem from a statutory framework, but were entirely dependent on the "political will" (Shanks, 1977:8) of the (at the time) nine member states.

The social agenda included a common vocational training policy (17) defined mainly with reference to two measures: the setting up of a European centre for vocational training and the approximation of training standards or gradual alignment of final stages of vocational training (ESC, 1976:3). These two measures proved to be hard to implement and the original plans were delayed or drastically watered down (Kirchner, 1977). In fact the pressure was for enlarging the scope of the action beyond the provision by the Treaty of Rome; but it was difficult to envisage the acceptable directions. The harmonisation of vocational certificates and training levels was not unanimously supported; the setting-up of a training centre was opposed by employers (Kirchner, 1977:70).

In both policy contexts (implementation of the Treaty's imperatives; intergovernmental agenda) vocational training remained a very marginal area; the approach was not effective and when decisions were taken their implementation was very arduous.

Inertness and "feeble and ineffective" action (Wedell, 1982:15) can only partially be imputed to the lack of provision in the Treaty of Rome; they may also be traced back to several structural and political factors. Some of these factors were internal to the EC policy system, some

external and some related to the interaction between internal and external factors. First, training and education had not been directly tackled in EC policy. The general perspective was ill-conceived (Wedell, 1982:11) from the point of view of the objectives, confused about the appropriate methods, and unrealistic because it was scarcely based on a sound understanding of national training systems (18). A supranational approach did not prove to be applicable as it was in the area of agriculture, anti-trust regulations or external trade tariffs. The harmonisation (19) perspective tried out in other areas (fiscal, monetary...) was difficult to implement in the training sector. The variety of the terms used (harmonisation, sensible harmonisation, alignment) could not help to overcome the lack of common definition of vocational training among the member states, or to define a strategy for coping with tradition-based arrangements and the resistance to supranationalism (Pinder, 1975:389ff) A simple functional approach ("gradual alignment so that workers could be able to take up jobs effectively elsewhere in the Community") failed to take into account the complex network of variables which training was entangled with. A long-term avenue of development was envisaged but the issue of which measures could promote it was left unexplored.

Second, the undefined status of training in the EC policy agenda prevented a more concentrated effort. Vocational training was mentioned in many action programmes, but remained marginal and played a complementary role. This dispersion was probably aggravated by the small amount of lateral transparency between different Directorates of the European Commission and the lack of co-ordination within the Directorate General for Social Affairs (Wedell, 1982:15-16).

Third, other factors such as the administrative structure and policy instruments accounted for the paucity of EC policy in this area. The prevailing bureaucratic role of the Community (lack of originality, inefficiency), the weakness of the instruments available, the administrative location of training were not favourable conditions for a major initiative (20). Apart from the task mentioned, the competence of the Commission was expressly limited to studies, to the giving of opinions and to the preparation of consultations - the weakest forms of initiatives. Directives in this area, let alone regulations, appeared too difficult to implement in member states which had weak training systems and without the financial means to carry such directives out. Research has shown the limits of action, from the organisation point of view of the Directorate General V (Social Affairs) (Michelmann:1978). The fragility of the administrative setting was confirmed by the birth and death of the Directorate Generale XII (Education) in 1973 and in 1981.

Finally, in political terms it may be noticed that there was no political pressure on the part of national governments to move forward. Moreover the power was highly dispersed and therefore, diffuse among various departments. In member states Ministries of Education had spent most of their energies in developing the education systems, enlarging the secondary and university sectors. Ministries of Labour were not well equipped for a strong lead in this field; others (Ministry of Industry and Commerce) were not directly involved. Dispersion of responsibility among various bodies and agencies prevented the emergence of a powerful and centralised voice. In addition, some Governments were and still are scared of dealing with training because of its links with education - an area which the Treaty of Rome does not provide for (Wedell, 1982:15). Trade unions and employers

were not interested in discussing crucial issues at the European level (Kirchner, 1977; Sargent, 1985) and were also ineffective and divided. The establishment of consultation and advisory bodies in the EC meant an increasing involvement of trade unions and employers representatives in the EC policy system. The umbrella organisations (ETUC and UNICE) used their strength and entered EC policy-making; however, their involvement was not a substitute for a lack of common positions and policies (Kirchner, 1977:40; Sargent, 1985:24).

8.3 YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT: CONCERN, PRESSURE AND OPTIONS

Problems of rising inflation, increasing unemployment and declining growth became major issues for all western countries after the 1973 oil crisis. The EC could not avoid being affected. This section outlines the changing context in which training issues arose, identifies the pressures put on EC institutions, and points out the available policy options.

In the second part of the 1970's a change took place. The policy process appeared to be caught up by structural and opposing dilemmas. The growing role of the European Council and of intergovernmentalism became entrenched. A potential source of strong action was failing and the dream of a 'Social Europe' gradually vanished. Changes in national leadership and increasing economic difficulties also accounted also for these dilemmas.

The divergence in economic policies (Cox, 1982; Kerman, Paloheimo and Whiteley, 1987), adopted by the national Governments, with consequent different economic performance and the growing concern with internal

difficulties made it difficult to reach substantial agreement at the European Council level. Countries with a good record in the fight against inflation, such as the Federal Republic of Germany, opposed all attempts to enlarge on major scale EC funding mechanisms.

This was the context. At the surface level, however, "better and full employment" was an overstated priority in the various agendas defined in the context of the Social Action Programme and maintained its salience after 1976. The setting-up of an EC agenda for dealing with unemployment was a slow process for various reasons.

First of all, as at the national level, the structural dimensions of unemployment in western countries were not immediately identified, but were gradually perceived. A co-ordinated policy for employment and a co-ordination between national labour administrations was called for in the framework of the Social Action programme at the first Summit of the enlarged Community (Paris, 1972). In the early 1970's, however, employment problems were mainly connected to the situation of weak groups or hard-to-employ groups in the labour market (migrants, women, handicapped people). It was the reaction to the energy crisis in 1973 which led to some concern about full employment. However, as an official document states:

"the Commission is convinced that, by appropriate policies, unemployment may be contained within the limits of usual fluctuation". (European Commission, Employment and Energy Situation, SEC (74) 1358 Final, 2 May 1974)

And the energy crisis has:

"highlighted even more the need for continuing social progress in the Social Action Programme". (idem)

It was in 1975 that the danger of unemployment was identified but the relatively small number of people out of work led to it being considered as a temporary event, not impossible to deal with. There was still hope of overcoming it:

"The deterioration in the labour market situation has taken an alarming proportion. The number of wholly unemployed will probably begin to decline only from mid 1976 onward" (European Commission, Annual Report on the Economic Situation in the Community, COM (75), 520 Final, 15 October 1975)

Some measures were taken; persons affected by employment difficulties and under 25 year of age became eligible for help through ESF. However, the difficulties of the situation appeared in the 1975 Report on the Social Situation:

"Whilst the solutions to the problem of employment and inflation are matters more effectively dealt with by action taken by member states themselves, the Community, despite all the difficulties and practical constraints continued to make a significant contribution towards social progress". (European Commission, Report on the Development of the Social Situation, 1975 p.7)

Below the surface level, undercurrent movements were shaking the previously calm water and pushing the EC into the high sea. The second reason for taking action lies in an institutional uncertainty. There was a call for action from many actors and from many quarters. These calls were directed to many respondents, but there was no clear and focused channelling of demands and no unequivocal identification of the body to be responsible for action to be taken. As at the national level, unemployment figures were a source of panic. They were certainly a challenge for the European Council which at the time was not in a favourable period for an active response. The

European Council was held back by emerging national attitudes and by the slackening of the early 1970's intergovernmental drive (Taylor, 1982). The European Parliament was unable to go beyond a discussion of the relevant issues. The Commission, having gone through a period of marginality, had not yet recovered (Taylor, 1982:74).

This led to a particularly difficult situation which impinged on the EC. The scourge of unemployment created an atmosphere of tension and uncertainty. Major points can be stressed from a reading of official documents. The worsening situation of unemployment in the EC was widely perceived as threatening both the cohesion among the member states and the identity of the EC itself. Since 1974 an explicit pursued objective had been to counteract growing nationalistic orientations, i.e. in the EC jargon "avoiding self-defeating policies in trade and competition". The Tripartite Conferences were the main settings for such debates. A document prepared for the 1975 session reckons that:

"The Community itself is in danger, for the countries will give in the temptation to use "beggar-my-neighbour" policies to protect national interests, sacrificing the benefits accruing from the Community solidarity". (COM (75) 540, 2 November 1975)

In the same document the need for action was presented as something linked to a "public responsibility":

"The public would find it difficult to understand if present needs failed to elicit a response from the Community institutions". (COM (75) 540, 2 November 1975)

The same concern was voiced by Shanks, a former executive

with the European Commission, in Brussels:

"If the EC could not solve these problems it would have difficulties retaining the loyalty of its citizens and it would not be well placed to resist demand for sectional protectionism which could only too easily snowball to a point at which the Common Market itself would be in danger". (Shanks, 1977:18)

The first reaction was a galvanising of the complex policy machinery and an increase of procedural work. This led to a frenetic activity on the part of all the major institutions of the EC. The ESC monitored carefully and critically the evolution of the debate and issued several opinions, some taken on its own initiative, about measures to be taken (ESC, 1978). The situation was perceived as critical and it was thought that an appeal to basic principles was needed. The state of affairs, according to ESC Opinion:

"...puts the EC under a particularly pressing obligation to create the bases for implementing the right to work as laid down in the European Social Charter and provide for, in fundamental terms, in the Treaty of Rome." (ESC, 1978:35)

Tripartite Conferences and SCE meetings were carried out. The ETUC was united on this topic (Kirchner, 1977:57); social partners were granted access to the Cabinet of several Directorate Generals - especially DGV (21). ETUC presented a memorandum to the Commission calling for job creation and the extension of compulsory schooling to the age of at least 16 (ETUI, 8.8.1975:1). National trade unionists looked for support from EMPs members of the European Parliament (The Times, 10.4.1977:20). However, the role of social partners in the advisory and consultative bodies, apart from the European Centre in Berlin was and is limited (Sargent, 1985). After 1976, more attention was devoted to the European Parliament.

The difficulty of the situation appeared to be matched by a dispersion of forces. The diminishing of the propulsive force of the European Council, the limited influence of the European Parliament, and a recovering Commission, could not do very much to contribute to a leading action by the EC on unemployment.

This was the climate in which the definition of a new agenda was developed. The output, first of all, halted the current programmes or called for their revision. Through the long list of official documents, there appears to have been a search for an adaptation of the Social Action Programme (22), the launch of a new programme and the demand for an adjustment of the Education Action Programme. The second reaction concerned the drawing of new and prestigious plans: a new 'employment European fund' (23) and the harmonisation of policies. At a 1975 meeting of SCE:

"Certain speakers felt that the present economic downturn was more than a temporary combination of economic recession and structural change of certain industries; the EC should be thinking of a supplementary response, which might take the form of an 'employment fund' designed to last as long as unemployment remained high in the nine countries." (ETUI, 1975:1).

This outstanding and ambitious attempt to set up a new Community instrument (a new employment fund) failed to be accepted mainly because of the lack of agreement on macro-economic policy (Shanks, 1977:78-80); the action kept a low profile. The creation of a European system of unemployment insurance never reached the political agenda, although the need for a gradual introduction of common elements in the European unemployment insurance systems had been defined in 1975. (23) The failure to adopt ambitious plans brought a further sense of

frustration. Some countries in fact asked for political guidelines for Community expenditure and for binding rules. These guidelines failed to be agreed at the level of the European Council. It was, therefore, the Commission that came under stress. A more realistic approach was developed.

A research programme concerning the development of the labour market was launched and initiatives in the field of statistical data were promoted because of the inadequacy of existing information bases. At the same time co-ordination of national policies on employment was increased (e.g. meetings of employment exchange officials) and a European system for the processing of vacancies and applications on international level was developed (the SEDOC system).

The unemployment issue marked a change in a general sense. There was a departure from the imperative of the Treaty of Rome and from general agendas agreed by the European Council. The new basis for action was a challenge. It was a situation which was becoming worse and how to cope with this problem was the basic rationale for the activity of EC institutions. This economic pressure led to a search for short-term measures, rather than for long-term measures and policies. At the same time, the surviving ideological attitude led the Council of Ministers and the Commission to issue recommendations and resolutions as part of a supranational definition of EC functions. However, the emergence of the problems prevented the definition of general principles in favour of pragmatic suggestions and advice to the national Governments.

The case of vocational training falls into this context; the initiatives which will be illustrated below were not directly based on the content of the Treaty of

Rome, and neither were they derived from outstanding and grand European agendas agreed by the European Council. They were the outcome of an urgent search for feasible options and of the need to restore credibility for the EC institutions.

8.4 THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING EMPHASIS

There are many logics of actions in the EC policy-making system and vocational training bears testimony to this. Some policy statements by the European Council seem to stem from a supranational stance (Etzioni, 1965) and they consider the EC as a source of values, policy orientations and norms. Some other statements, for instance the Guidelines for the Management of the ESF, appear to support an administrative perspective (Coombes, 1970). Bearing in mind that organisational life may include and cherish ritualistic components (Meyer and Rowan, 1977) the role of the European Commission as a policy actor will be focused on. In general terms policy formation included the definition of a proposal for action by the Commission, its approval by the Council of Ministers and its implementation by the Commission. The main problem for the Commission was the feasibility of the proposals; in an interview Vredeling, Social Affairs Commissioner at the time, stressed this point with reference to the search for action for the young:

"It would be wrong to suppose that some new ideas should suddenly emerge from Brussels, our horizons are determined by national ideas. For example there is a programme in England to prepare young people for work. But if we want to introduce it for 100,000 young people in the whole Community we would need at least DM 700m. And the richer Community countries would have to shoulder more of the burden than the poorest ones." (The Times, 7.6.1977:III)

Three initiatives will be considered: the decision to use ESF resources for youth training (1975; 1978), the Commission's Recommendation on vocational preparation (1977) and the launch of the Pilot Projects on the transition from school to work (1977-1980). All three initiatives were taken up under the pressure for action and as a way out of the moral panic created by youth unemployment (see Section 8.3). They also have a wider significance in illustrating the potentials and limitations of EC institutions in the area of vocational training. Dilemmas and inherent constraints emerged from this.

Training-related actions are concentrated on here although other actions, particularly in the area of employment policy, were considered (24). Training was not the first measure to be considered; it is necessary, therefore, to investigate why it became crucial. In the EC employment policy documents vocational training for young unemployed people did not appear at the beginning. A EC sponsored report about employment policies showed in 1977 that member states were not considering training as a anti-cyclical measure (in France and the Federal Republic of Germany resources devoted to adult training did not increase in the 1970's). The only recommendation was the opening of training opportunities for adults to the youngsters as well. (25) In the face of a lack of decisions about a wide-ranging initiative to improve the employment situation, the actions for youth referred to here came out as practicable measures. This was because of the role of the European Commission and the unquestionable basis in the statutory competences of the EC institutions. This was the context in which measures concerning vocational training were designed. Because of the nature of this context, this analysis of the EC intervention is not directly concerned with the formation

of an overall policy, but with the way in which training issues came to be dealt with.

In spite of the, above mentioned, rejection of anti-cyclical training, particular emphasis was put on vocational training (Wedell, 1982). This was in line with current trends in member countries where training-oriented measures as well as employment policy measures were under scrutiny and the former were seen as alternatives to unemployment benefits (Federal Employment Institute, 1978:177; see also Chapter Five: Sect.5.4; Chapter Seven: Sect.7.3). The view that vocational training programmes have long-term effects and increase the individual's chances of employment was shared and supported by the OECD (OECD, 1978b). Moreover, the definition of and the agreement about employment-oriented measures at the EC level required more time. (26)

Although the actions referred to above could be viewed in terms of interaction between EC and national levels (Laffan, 1983), the objective and rationale of the initiatives as they were presented at the EC level and the national impact of these, will be considered in the following section.

The decision to use the ESF resources for youth unemployment came out as a legitimate, feasible option, in line with the well-established EC policy system with no need for reaching a consensus about new major solutions. The Treaty of Rome states the ESF's objectives, ("render the employment of workers easier and increase their geographical and occupational mobility" Treaty of Rome, sect.123) its mode of operation, and allows for periodic revision and the granting of new tasks to the Fund. A major revision took place in 1971: the reform made funds available not only for labour retraining and resettlement necessary because of economic

change, but also for the development of EC policies. Compared with other EC funds such as those used for the CAP, the ESF (Collins, 1983; Laffan, 1983; Coates and Wallace, 1984) does not serve a specific EC policy. However, it does not operate on the basis of an agreed quota system among the member countries and it leaves room for policy discretion (27). The scale of the ESF increased during the 1970's and its share of the EC resources grew (see Tab. 8.1).

Tab 8.1. - Community Payment by Sectors 1973-1980

	1973	1978	1979	1980
Sectors	%	%	%	%
Administration	6.0	5.7	5.4	5.0
EAGGF Guar.	79.3	77.5	72.6	69.4
EAGGF Guid.	3.1	2.7	2.8	3.7
ES	1.2	2.4	4.1	4.5
ERDF	--	2.1	3.6	4.5
Research et al.	1.8	1.6	1.8	1.8
Co-operation				
Develop. Countr.	2.6	2.2	2.8	3.1
Other Sectors	0.1	0.3	0.6	0.5
Reimbursement	5.9	5.5	6.3	7.5
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of data: Court of Auditors, 1981.

The European Commission and national governments do not share the same view of the ESF (28): the former has a 'developmental view' of it as an instrument in order to implement or facilitate a common policy; the latter prefer to use the ESF for financing their own programmes. There is uncertainty about finances, variations in budgetary appropriation (Coates and Wallace, 1984:171), priority setting, guidelines to be followed and their re-interpretation, and the processes relating to vetting of

applications. According to Shanks (1977), the ESF, in the period of interest here, provided for 5 or 10% of the total spending of national Governments for vocational training; however, for some specific national programmes the ESF was able to provide substantial help. From this point of view, the working of the Fund is interesting not only for the discretionary power of the Commission and of the European Social Fund Committee, but also for its impact on national policy-making (See Chapter Three:Sect.3.4.4). As stated earlier, the ESF has been considered as a parallel instrument in relation to national policies - as an instrument which complements rather than directs such policies (Pinder, 1979; Laffan, 1983). This is not simply the result of discretion on the part of the Commission (Laffan, 1983). This question will be considered in the next section.

The increase of ESF resources (see Tab.8.1) in the second half of the 1970's was determined by the worsening unemployment situation; in particular the amount of resources devoted to young people registered a huge growth (more than one third of resources in 1980; see Tab.8.2). The ESF was considered to be an instrument for action against unemployment: this approach was proposed by the European Commission, supported by tripartite committees and by the EP. And vocational training was the major area of action prior to 1979.

Table 8.2 - European Social Fund appropriations available (1977 1980)

	1977 %	1978 %	1979 %	1980 %
New Operations for young people	--	--	9.4	--
Young people	27.9	31.4	30.0	39.4
Textiles and people leaving agriculture	8.7	6.1	4.6	3.2
Women	--	1.4	2.3	2.2
Migrants	4.0	2.8	3.0	3.3
Handicapped (training of instructors)	3.7	--	--	--
Employment aids in regions	50.2	49.4	42.4	43.5
Handicapped people	5.3	8.6	8.0	8.1
Pilot schemes	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source of data: Court of Auditors, 1981.

This increase in resources and the concentration of resources on youth was achieved in two successive stages: in 1975 a Council Decision included among activities eligible for support "specific operations to facilitate the employment and the geographical mobility of young people under 25 year of age who are unemployed or seeking employment". In 1978 the European Council approved a regulation presented by the Commission on a new form of aid from the ESF for young people. According to the regulation, assistance was made possible for the recruitment of young people under 25 by means of "additional jobs likely to provide experience with a vocational content and for the employment of young people by means of additional job which fulfil a public need". The European Commission and the ESFC operated the Fund on the basis of these decisions. From the existing literature, it appears that the management of the Fund was largely determined by procedural requirements with a

lack of co-ordination between goals and procedures (Wedell, 1982; Coates and Wallace, 1984:179).

The definition of the specific criteria for eligibility was carried out by the Commission which issued guidelines, "which represent in essence", according to Laffan "the discretionary power of the Commission". Guidelines were defined in 1973 and in subsequent years. It is interesting to note that, as far as young people are concerned, priority status was given in 1977 to a specific policy option, i.e. 'vocational preparation' defined in the 1977 Recommendation as "those activities that aim to assure for young people a satisfactory transition from school to work by providing them with the minimum knowledge and skills necessary for working life". Although a surface reading may sometimes be misleading, this specification seems to mark a move towards the identification of substantial as well as procedural criteria in the management of the Fund. In fact when the 1974 guidelines are compared with those from 1977, the differences appear; in 1973 resources were made available for those:

"operations that are complementary or additional to the programme already decided...and the Community will support any action which is seriously new in character and which has a particular promotional catalyst effect." (European Commission, "Guidelines for the Management of the European Social Fund during financial year 1974", Official Journal 28 July 1973)

In 1977 the Commission guidelines stated that:

"Entitlement to first level of priority is accorded to operation of vocational preparation." (European Commission, "Guidelines for the Management of the European Social Fund during financial year 1977", Official Journal, C 141 2, 15 June 1977)

This shift in the content of the guidelines points to the second initiative under scrutiny in this section: the 1977 Recommendation on Vocational Preparation (29).

The basic policy process in this context is the relationship between policy definition and the use of financial resources. Although the Recommendation on vocational preparation may be seen as the first of a series of "manifestos" about vocational training that were issued by the EC institutions (30), it illustrates important patterns of policy-making at the EC level in the sector of vocational training.

The Recommendation on vocational preparation was, at the time, something new in the context of EC action. Unlike other recommendations, it was based on the Commission's initiative, it was taken without a specific mandate from the Council, it was not formulated in overgeneralised terms, it was advisory and not binding in character, and it was intended to be an answer to a common problem rather than as the implementation of measures agreed by national governments in the framework of "political co-operation".

Prepared and approved by the Commission, in a relatively short time and not endorsed by the Council's authority, it was neither a decision, nor a resolution. This aspect was stressed in the opinion given by the ESC on this recommendation:

"The Committee...endorses the urgency with which the Commission has carried out the preparatory work. Basically, the Committee feels that a Directive on vocational preparation measures for young people who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment would have been much better. In view of the difficulty and time involving in passing a Directive, however the choice of a

Recommendation seems acceptable at the present juncture" (Economic and Social Committee, 1977:16)

In the Recommendation, the Commission operated some basic choices: specific "training measures" were considered as responses to unemployment and the emphasis was put upon school leavers without qualifications. According to the Recommendation, vocational preparation should include:

- "a) vocational guidance;
- b) reinforcement and application of basic skills;
- c) understanding the basic principles of economic and social organisation;
- d) practical initial training in a broad skill area;
- e) practical experience of work, either in enterprise or by such other means as provide equivalent experience." (See note 29)

As far as young people were concerned the Recommendation specified that vocational preparation should be made available to "young people between the end of compulsory school attendance and the age of 25" with special attention to those who were unemployed and those who had never received adequate vocational training. (31) Bearing in mind the concurrent attempts made by member states, it is difficult to believe that this priority was beyond discussion. The ESC showed some disappointment:

"The Committee calls upon the Commission to devote greater and more urgent attention in future to the question of organising job creation schemes...whilst to draw attention to the fact that youth unemployment cannot be solved by vocational training measures". (Economic and Social Committee, 1977:15-16)

Although the definition of vocational preparation ("those activities that aim to assure for young people a satisfactory transition from school to work by providing them with the minimum knowledge and skills necessary for working life") may be considered to have been abstract,

its content and its target group were specific.(32) The Recommendation was meant to be linked to the general EC policy:

"The Commission...intends as far as possible to take into account the terms of the recommendation in the allocation of Social Fund grants to training programmes for young people". (Official Journal, L 180 18, 20 July 1977 p.12 - COM 77.467.EEC)

Unlike at other times, the initiative was taken by the Commission; there was no reference to a mandate received by the Council; the basis for the recommendation, noted in the first part of the document, was the unemployment problem. In addition, the Commission commented that the experience of some member states had been taken into consideration. One year later an assessment was promoted by the Commission in order to look into the application of the recommendation; the main conclusion of the evaluation report was that:

"Very few programmes...match the conditions set by the Recommendation. However, some appear to be nearer; among them the French vocational preparation courses, training courses organised by the Training Services Agency in the United Kingdom and, in the same country, the Community Industry Project." (Magnusson, 1978:53)

Compared with other previous initiatives, such as the definition of general principles (1963) and the search for harmonisation of training, the two initiatives considered here reveal a more pragmatic, specific and problem-oriented approach. The work done for the Social Action programme had definitely pointed out that the time of high-level aspirations, had gone and that the "feasible" and "acceptable" were the new categories. It is not specific, however, in relation to special issues (training in schools or out with them). In the long term the recommendation a vocational preparation was outdated and was completely obliterated. It was, however, an

unusual attempt to cope with the problem of youth unemployment.

The third initiative referred to here - the pilot schemes on transition (32) - was designed to set an ambitious "co-operative learning process" among member states, and more particularly among policy-makers and practitioners with the aim of analysing problems and identifying successful approaches. At the time transition was considered to be the crucial aspect for youth unemployment and for the preparation for work.

The scheme came out, unexpectedly, in the framework of the Education Action Programme (DG XII); it was not included in the various agendas compiled before 1976. In 1972 the Janne Report pointed out some 'emerging fields' as areas of action for the Community, including "adult education, the new technologies of education, the mass media, the pre-primary level" (European Economic Community, 1972:51). Even in the 1976 Council resolution comprising an action programme in the field of education, reference to young people seemed to have been added at the last moment to an already long list of priorities.(33) It was recognised that priority should be given at the Community level to:

"Measures to be taken in the field of education to prepare young people for work, to facilitate their transition from study to working life and to increase their chances of finding employment thereby reducing the risks of unemployment..."
(31)

In a successive Resolution (December 1976) transition became the main issue and for the period (1977-1980) the following initiatives were decided:

- "1. The implementation of pilot projects and studies to assist in the evaluation and development of national policies...
2. the preparation of a report analysing....

3. the organisation of study visits...workshops for teachers and trainers of teachers;
 4. the preparation by the Statistics Office of guidelines for the comparison of existing statistic information;
 5. the extension of the existing Community arrangements to provide regular information "
- (See note 32)

Endorsed by the Ministers of Education, the plan was compiled on the basis of a survey carried out by experts (34) and included a complex scheme of experiments (29 projects focusing on various aspects of the transition from school to work) to be set up in the member states under the supervision of selected national institutions (IFAPLAN, 1980). The rationale of the scheme was put by the Education Committee Report in these terms:

"An active process of learning through direct experience could be developed by means of Community investment in a number of pilot projects, the purpose of which would be to develop and try out new approaches, to explore common problem areas in greater depth to assist in the transfer of experience between Member States when appropriate and to help in certain cases to achieve new goals" (Education Committee Report to the Council, 1976:61)

Supported by a background analysis, compiled by national experts, and financed through Commission's internal resources, the pilot projects were carried out for an initial three year period (1977-1980). This avenue of action, not unusual in EC policy (35), made it possible to enter the school system and to enlarge the EC constituency thus reaching the grass roots level. It is arguable that the scheme was in some way a substitute for the lack of a proper policy in this area and of a more incisive action by the European Commission (36).

These three initiatives show a renovated strength on the part of the Commission both as policy initiator and

as executive body, in a context of a lack of major political commitment by the European Council.

The newly born European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, run on a tripartite basis (Kulakowski and Rachesa, 1975:3), focused on youth unemployment as one of the priority issues to be dealt with (European Centre, 1977b). Although other solutions were subsequently considered (37), vocational training maintained its relevance (see, as an example, the idea of social guarantee presented in a policy document in 1982 calling for at least two years of further education, training or work experience after leaving full time compulsory schooling; this document is referred to in Chapter Four:Sect.4.4.2).

It is worth noticing how the Commission managed to take measures in this area without being entangled in the endless discussion about controversial training issues which was dealt with in Chapter Two.(38) In addition, the Commission obtained some support from social partners without forcing them to agree about a grand policy. In this respect it is of note that although, as was said earlier, vocational training was at the border of EC policy-making, it is a sector where there was the development of a partnership between the EC system and European or national representatives of trade unions and (Sargent, 1985:242-3) particularly through the Managing Board of the European Centre and the ESF Committee. This facilitated the implementation of EC decisions without requiring the development of a European policy by European trade unions and employers' organisations with a binding nature upon its national membership.

8.5 NATIONAL INTERESTS

The domestic side of EC policy-making has been studied in terms of policy-networks between European and national levels (Laffan, 1983), in terms of supranational elites (Puchala) and in terms of domestic policy-making (Bulmer, 1983). Member states attitude towards EC policy-system and their interest in EC are determinants of EC policy. This link concerns national governments, administrative structures and national policy-making substructures; in addition the penetration of policy-making includes cultural, administrative and political components. In the area being analysed here the basic questions to be addressed are:

- (a) Why issues based on national situations entered the EC political agenda? Why national policy actors considered the EC level as appropriate one for dealing with that issue? What were the expectations regarding the EC?
- (b) How did national policy system penetrate EC policy-making processes?
- (c) How did policy priorities reach the agenda and originate decisions? to what extent domestic politics were involved?
- (d) How was EC resource allocation affected by national policy actors?

The national dimension in the EC policy formation and implementation with reference to the United Kingdom will now be investigated. (39) This will include: (a) the attitude of British policy actors toward the EC in the 1970's especially on the unemployment issue; (b) the convergence of conditions strengthening the potential influence of the United Kingdom on EC policies; (c) the similarities and differences in policy priority; (d) the use of ESF resources by the United Kingdom.

As a non-founding father, the United Kingdom had to choose to join an already existing EC. It was a question of assessing the pros and cons; the EC membership was not beyond discussion and recurrent criticisms were politically perceived as damaging. However half-hearted (Dahrendorf, 1982:145) the major political actors (Government, trade unions, political parties) were on the European issue, interest in Europe reached a high level after the referendum (1975) and with the employment issue.

Facing tremendous internal problems the Labour Government and trade unions reiterated their call in 1975-1976 for EC action in the fight against unemployment. The EC appeared as an arena where problems could be posed (see The Economist 7.2.1976:55; and 6.3.1976), and a European dimension was present in the domestic political debate. In the discussion about unemployment a growing faith in the value of collective EC action was clearly shown in 1976. Prime Minister Callaghan in a party meeting in 1976 said:

"The Commission in Brussels should devote all its energies to the problem of structural unemployment...they should put forward proposals that will enable the members of the Community to work together to overcome the devil of unemployment in all the member countries." (The Times, 31.1.1976:3)

Suffering from a poor international image, political leaders found a useful arena in which to show the ongoing process in the United Kingdom; internally it could function as a scapegoat for domestic difficulties. At the Luxemburg Summit (3 April 1976) the British Prime Minister contrasted the Federal Republic of Germany's position which was centred on economic policy.

The British approach was, however, basically pragmatic and realistic although some frustration emerged. Failing

to give concrete indications of what the EC could do it was recognised a few months later that most of the measures had to be left to individual member governments. The only option left was to look at ways of using the EC's social and regional funds in order to relieve the plight of the jobless. (40) This frustration was shared by the TUC and the ETUC, particularly at the conclusions of Summits such as the one held in Rome (March 1977).

Pragmatism and realism emerged in the area of employment policies. Training was not at stake. The British delegation judged in 1972 that a complete implementation of the 1963 principles could have led to basic problems and that there was no such a threat from harmonisation policy. This attitude substantiated the impressive penetration of EC policy making by the United Kingdom. Some basic events made it possible for the UK to be influential. At the general level there was at the time a call for a stronger function of the Commission after years of its having had a fading role. The new commission in 1977 was expected to bring new blood and a new atmosphere. The President of the Commission (R.Jenkins) was British and the United Kingdom had the Presidency of the Council of Ministers; the Commissioner for Social Affairs (I.Richard) was also British. (41) At the same time (1976-78) the chairman of the ESC was Mr De Ferranti from Britain; the TUC representatives entered the various consultative and advisory bodies with the aim of making their presence visible and effective.

The effect of this situation can be seen in the area of unemployment where the vocational preparation perspective clearly had its roots in the contemporary policies pursued at the national level and where ESF resources were significantly devoted to actual changes in the United Kingdom. It is difficult to prove that schemes such as YOP and YTS were designed around the ESF. The

processes were complex. In the Italian case article 2 of the 1977 Act states:

"Regional programmes have to be planned in a way that they could be financially supported by the European Social Fund". (Legge 1 June 1977, art. 2d) "I programmi regionali devono essere predisposti in modo da poter usufruire del concorso finanziario del Fondo Sociale".

The recommendation on vocational preparation and the emphasis upon the school leavers concerned all the European member governments: in a sense it was a common problem (42). The United Kingdom, in particular, could provide the most up-to-date elaboration on this topic supported by a wide process of experiments. However, by comparing the individual countries, it seems that this target group had not enjoy the same level of priority. It appears from the consultative conferences organised by the European Centre (1977; 1978) that in Italy the problems more concerned well educated people and the stress was upon creating jobs.(43) This did not remain unnoticed ; as stated before, in its Opinion the ESC noted that the Commission's Recommendation did not deal with the problems of the transition to working life of young people leaving higher education. (ESC 1978:17) In the Federal Republic of Germany the introduction of the tenth year was meant to broaden the narrow approach by apprenticeship.(44) It is interesting to compare the similarity of the concept of vocational preparation as defined in EC documents and its contents with the contemporary development in the United Kingdom. This concentration on young people between 16 and 19 was included in major policy documents. (40)

As a policy perspective, vocational preparation could not be extended to every body; it would have cost too much and some of these changes might have affected the basic system of education and training which is

unchangeable in the short run. Again, the British approach of piloting, became a basic choice at the EC level.

Influence on priorities means access to finances. It is worth noticing that the Recommendation was issued by the Commission without great and full consultation with or endorsement by the Council. The European Centre developed the idea of transition in a special project of research. Moreover the recommendation was not just a declaration of intent or a simple suggestion; it was referred to in the guidelines for the ESF.

It is open to discussion as to whether the ESF influenced the UK training system (Collins, 1983:2) or even that this is an unanswerable question (Coates and Wallace, 1984:176). That ESF resources were used efficiently and that training actions were planned in order to match the EC criteria is also questionable.

It is, however, possible to illustrate a situation in which substantial contributions were given to the UK, where specific help was concentrated on vocational preparation and where the bulk of grant-aid was used to support Government-funded training schemes. (45) Italy the other major ESF receiver, did not concentrate the use of ESF resources in one area; greater dispersion (plurality of actors) and greater diversification (no general policy) reduced the chances of using ESF for an explicit policy (ISFOL, 1974).

**Tab. 8.3 - European Social Fund - Young people
(1976-1980)**

Countries	France	Italy	UK	Other EC Countries	Total
	%	%	%	%	%
Year					
1976	22.9	21.0	38.3	17.8 0	100.0
1977	30.4	22.5	36.4	10.7 0	100.0
1978	21.7	35.2	21.1	22.0 0	100.0
1979	15.3	23.3	41.8	19.6 0	100.0
1980x	18.8	28.3	30.3	22.6 0	100.0
1980xx	28.8	18.1	34.7	18.4 0	100.0

x = Training

xx = Employment Aid

Source: Collins, 1983:75

Previous divergent views about the ESF between the British Government and the EC institutions (Collins, 1983:75) did not prevent the large use of ESF resources for the training of youth in the United Kingdom. Three relevant factors may be referred to. First, the Government was very determined in its attempt to move the ESF in more suitable direction for British interests and to maintain a good share of this resource. Second, the control by the MSC of the major development and the use of the DE as channel for ESF applications facilitated a centralised use of the ESF resources. Third, the distributive pattern of ESF resources was based on the assumption that the ESF resources were a kind of repayment of part of the British contribution to the Community budget and therefore belonging to the Government (Collins, 1983:76). (46) As a result the ESF support was not dispersed; in 1978 98.0% of the ESF resources to the United Kingdom were allocated to central and local Government including the MSC, with 0.80% to the ITBs and 0.40 to voluntary organisations (Collins, 1983:86). The same pattern was followed in the subsequent years. This monopolistic position may have been an

obstacle to the EC objectives; however this sort of blanket application made it possible for a single country to obtain in 1979 41.8% of the resources of the budget for the training of young people.(47)

The relevance of ESF resources was increased by the contemporary reduction in public expenditure (Coates and Wallace, 1984:177). The fact that ESF funded short-term measures put the UK in a more favourable position than other countries where long-term policy had been in operation for some time. (48) In the following years other statements by the EC were issued, but the implications for resource allocation was not as strong and direct (see EC documents on alternance and social guarantee). The case of vocational preparation was an example of how, in specific circumstances, national policy-actors may use the EC arena both for introducing a particularist definition of the issues and for a specific use of the resources.

A number of positive circumstances favoured the British penetration. It did not mean more power for the UK, nor a more effective working of the ESF in the UK. It only showed how policy-making at the national level was interrelated with policy-making at the EC level. This interrelation consisted mainly of channelling ideas, political salience of the EC, operating through EC institutions (they were dependent for the implementation on national bodies), and relevance of the funds. The patterns may have been different for other countries in the way in which funds were obtained from the ESF.

This process exemplifies one of the dilemmas of EC policy-making: a specific programme or policy defined at the EC level can be implemented only if it coincides with national programmes. Moreover, national administrations

held a central position in the way the ESF resources are allocated at the national level (Collins, 1983:5).

8.6 POLICY RATIONALES AND THEIR CONSTRAINTS

In this chapter it has been shown that the logic of policy-making does not follow the logic of integration (Bulmer, 1983:352). If evaluated in terms of how many pieces of legislation were passed and how much of the national authority was transferred to the Community by the national Governments, the performance of the EC in the sector of vocational training is by no means unsatisfactory. However, there is no reason for thinking that the EC will be transformed into something different (Bush and Puchala, 1976:248). The EC is a "system of institutions with finite resources, subject to similar constraints, and faced with multiple and conflicting demands from the environment" (Averyt, 1975:970). In the previous sections linkages and influence structures (Bush and Puchala, 1976) and the bargaining among policy actors have been shown; the relevance of domestic politics and national policy systems appeared to be clearly evident. In the EC policy process approaches vary from one sector to another. However, individual policy sectors are not totally independent. In the previous sections it has been disclosed that the meaning of vocational training policy changed from the 1960's to the 1970's according to the different overall perspectives, and that unemployment exerted a powerful pressure and forced the EC to play its own cards. This led to a different set of assumptions about the EC role: a move from an ideological approach to direct contact with its policy environment.

Bearing in mind the hypotheses presented in Chapter Four, the policy rationales will be focused on: (a) the EC paralleled national actions; (b) the EC stressed its role of "cognitive mobilisation" (49). These rationales may be seen as the two basic political methods for dealing with diversity in national systems of vocational training; their use was not without dilemmas and constraints as will be discussed in this section.

The diversity of training arrangements in the EC countries did not prevent common action or EC action; however, this diversity determined the way in which action was defined and implemented. The policy network operated not in the vacuum of well balanced expectations, but filtered in an asymmetric way through demands and pressure from individual national actors and produced 'nationally biased' decisions. The three initiatives above analysed proved to be compatible with the existing national patterns of vocational training; no choice was made between apprenticeship and school-based training nor there were authoritative statements about the funding of vocational training. The initiatives by the EC were part of contemporary policy-making and they interacted with contemporary processes at the national level. Only an episode in the EC vocational training policy has been analysed. This episode, however, maintains a broader significance as far as training is concerned.

First of all, the actions fall in line with a parallel approach (Pinder, 1979:551; Wallace, 1982:65); initiatives taken by EC paralleled those taken by individual countries. Pinder talks of an extra-national stance which does not suppress national instruments or make them uniform, but works alongside (Pinder, 1975:392). The concept however might indicate that the EC has a kind of independent existence.(50) It does not impose regulations; it is also a general stance in other

areas. In the sector of vocational training there are some factors that make this choice inevitable. First, due to the particularist approach followed by single countries, any attempt to develop a policy is caught up in a dilemma. A definition in general terms is useless, while a specification tends to be nationally biased. When pressure is high and action cannot be delayed the terms in which a policy may be defined are drawn from national experiences. (51) Second, the EC has no chance to elaborate its own policy; there is no think-tank however desirable this would be. The Commission is dependent on: "information and evaluation by national authority about the policy problems to be addressed and the appropriate means for solving them." (Coates and Wallace, 1984:165) (Laffan, 1983:407) and is forced to borrow from them (Laffan, 1983:407). (52) This point is outlined by Shanks:

"One of the greatest weakness of the EC institutions to date has been the lack of any organised capacity for forward planning or technological forecasting. As a result the EC has to base its programme on measures which implement the Treaty of Rome, almost regardless of their immediate relevance. The lack of such capacity ...means that Europe is reacting far too slowly to the challenges and opportunities thrown up by a rapidly changing environment. The EC's approach to current crisis seems exclusively legalistic and backward looking." (The Times, 18.8.1977:12)

Third, as the definition of policy is linked to other decisions that are relevant for national policy actors, the process is complicated by national interests. (53) Although the Commission is supposed to initiate a policy, it can only do it when it is under pressure, both internal and external. The consensus about action is induced from the environment more than being created from within. The situation of national interests is complicated by the fact that the use of instruments such as ESF implies some form of redistribution and not all

countries will agree about this. And, finally, the implementation of EC policy depends on national administrative systems that the EC officials do not control.(54) This lack of control makes an evaluation of the efficiency of the EC instruments useless (Wedell, 1982 :11-12). Even in the transition project the planning and the working of the initiative was determined by a local situation as it appeared in a report made by someone working on the project (Stronach and Weir, 1983).

This situation does not mean that the implementation of EC policy would necessarily be in favour of one country or another; it is unlikely that the European Commission would upset individual countries, e.g. in the management of the ESF.

A line of operation that tended to be parallel was initiated with the special projects on transition. The Commission is dependent on national bodies in implementing a policy (Laffan, 1983:407); with the Projects a new avenue of action was devised aiming at penetrating member states through an alternative network with its own structure. The outcome of the projects was not to put into practice general directives, but to help local developments. And this parallel development is clearly shown in EC evaluative reports (55). Creating a network of projects is an alternative to a policy decision in the form of a directive or regulations, but it could be both an alternative and a method in linking the EC action to the national contexts.

The second rationale that can be identified was the emphasis upon the process of 'co-operative learning' and an evolution from the original attempt to emanate principles to an attempt to exchange information. This 'enlightening function' has always been one of the aims of the EC (Section 118 of the Treaty of Rome). The EC

shares this function with other international bodies; but in the EC context it is placed inside processes of policy formation and implementation.

This function has been institutionalised with the setting up of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. (56) The conditions under which these processes took place heavily affected their characteristics. This was not an open arena for debate; the limit to the research work carried out or sponsored by the European Centre stemmed from its direct involvement with the policy process. (57) The research themes, in general, are determined by political bodies (e.g. the management board in the case of the European Centre...). The conclusions are supposed to be relevant for policy-makers; however, they do not always satisfy EC needs and are difficult to use in a decentralised system. They rely upon national experts. (58)

The definition or identification of policies tends to be, as a consequence, reactive, or at least contemporary; rarely it can be considered anticipatory. However, this functions to contribute to the enlargement of the EC constituency and consolidates a European-minded intelligentsia thus strengthening the links between national agencies (BAA, ADEP, MSC, ADEP, ISFOL). (60) This international constituency gathers experts, policy-makers, administrators and practitioners from member countries.

The 'Common Vocational Training Policy' appears to be a melting pot in which 'cognitive mobilisation' and policy-making process are highly entangled. It is unrealistic to conceive a common policy in terms of a set of prescriptive principles to be implemented, as had been attempted in the early 1960's. The fundamental decisions concerning vocational training are taken at the national

level. This does not mean that in particular cases demand grows and expectations develop for an EC action; the EC funding instruments may be used in connection with training, special projects may be launched and new policy perspectives may be formulated in EC documents.

Both the two rationales - EC actions as parallel to national actions and the policy promotion function - do not account for all of the policy process; they highlight two patterns of action that may be identified in a context where rhetoric and real decisions are sometimes hard to discriminate.

8.7 CONCLUSION

With reference to the stated aims of this Chapter (Sect. 8.1) some considerations may be made in terms of some general remarks based on this case study and which may also be applicable to other case studies. First, vocational training is a potential area of concern for the EC however marginal it has been in the EC's development and however weak the available instruments have been (Sect. 8.2). A supranational approach (i.e. the EC as a source of prescriptive orientations for policy-makers) proved to be fallacious, even in the soft form of general principles. This approach, however, survives behind the scenes and in the way policy documents are still termed. Second, a major pressure for action may come more from the environment than from internal forces. National Governments and existing training substructures are the main actors. If there is a demand at the national level for an EC action and this demand is based on widely spread issues across national boundaries, the entering of the issue on the EC political agenda depends on the level

of penetration between the national and the European policy-system. Third, broad issues such as youth unemployment may provide a political impetus for overcoming the inertia (Sect.8.3). The processing of the issue largely depends upon the balance between different EC institutions. In the second half of the 1970's the lack of consensus and divergence in the policies pursued by national Governments prevented major initiatives by the European Council; this put pressure upon the European Commission. Fourth, facing a major problem, the Commission had to use its own resources and make the best out of its own competences; i.e. mainly using the ESF for fighting unemployment, stressing the advisory function towards national Governments and adopting a developmental approach (pilot projects) (Sect.8.3). Fifth, in so doing the Commission had to rely on national actors both for the policy contents and for its implementation (Sect.8.5).

Finally, the way in which training issues have been processed may be summarised in two rationales: parallel action and 'co-operative learning' (Sect.8.6). Action by the EC tends to parallel current developments at the national level. Not all developments are subject to this process, those that are more common or have equivalents in several member states are more likely to show this. In both avenues of action there seems to be little doubt that national inputs are dominant. EC policy echoes national policies and so, indirectly, supports them. Harmonisation is not required and, moreover, is not on the agenda. This approach does not disturb national particularism; it does not direct towards convergence. However it may be influential in that it defines a general framework, promotes the circulation of ideas and forms invisible colleges and supports those initiatives that are less particularist.

NOTES

(1) The definition of vocational training at the EC level tends to be broad and very general due to the diversity among training systems in the member countries (See also Chapter Two. Note n.6). As far as the administrative and institutional structure is concerned we shall focus on the initiatives taken by the Directorate General V (Social Affairs) and XII (Research, Science and Education) of the Commission of the European Economic Community. This structure has been modified in the 1980's.

(2) The number of bodies involved bears testimony to the complexity of the organisational and advisory machinery. With regard to vocational training the following have to be considered:

1. the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) set up in 1964 and including representatives of the national Governments, trade unions and employers.
2. the Economic and Social Committee.
3. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training set up in 1974 and administered by a tripartite managing board.
4. The Committee on the European Social Fund.
5. The Standing Committee on Employment (SCE)
6. the Tripartite Conferences.

(3) See Chapter Three, Note n.12. The way in which national policy process relate to the EC policy-making in the sector of vocational training has been under investigation by a number of authors (Collins, 1975; Shanks, 1977; Finn, 1982; Laffan, 1983; Neave, 1984); however, there are no satisfactory conceptual frameworks.

(4) See Appendixes One and Two. See Hopking (1981) and Jeffries (1981) for an introduction to the EC policy system and to EC documentation. The recent contribution by Neave (1988) on EEC vocational training policy has been read after the compilation of this thesis.

(5) In the presentation of policies there are regular references to basic documents and statements building up a picture of a continuing process over a long period of time. For example, in September 1983 the European Commission approved a communication to the European Council on the comparability of the vocational training qualification in the European Community; this initiative was presented as a step forwards in the implementation of one of the long-established principles for a 'common

vocational training policy' adopted in 1963 (European Commission, Information, P-79, September 1983, Brussels).

(6) EEC, 1973:6.

(7) These two concepts have been developed and used in studies of EC policy-making. According to the supranational perspective, EC institutions are assumed to operate within a legal framework and to issue regulations and directives to the national Governments. Intergovernmentalism refers to the setting of the EC agenda through a process of confrontation, co-operation and negotiation among national Governments; as a consequence the European Council and the meetings of national ministries play the crucial role in policy-making. See Pinder, 1975; Taylor, 1982.

(8) Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, Rome 25 March 1957.

(9) The same Section 118 specifies the means to be used for fulfilling these functions: "the carrying out of studies, the giving of opinions and the organising of consultation both on problems arising at the national level and on those of concern to international organisations".

(10) See Chapter Three, Note n.7 about the 'Community Method'.

(11) In an interview an EC official stressed the funding nature of the principles ("ten as the ten Commandments").

(12) "General Principles for Implementing a Vocational Training Policy. Decision of the Council.", Official Journal of the European Communities, 266, 20.4.1963.

(13) See an account of EC action in the field of vocational guidance and approximation of training levels in Social Europe (1985 Suppl) and in Vocational Training Bulletin (n.10, 1985).

(14) In an interview, an EC official who took part in the definition of the principles has confirmed that the "enthusiasm of the time was undoubtedly overoptimistic".

(15) Two avenues of action are indicated. The first concerns the development of exchange of information and co-operation at the EC level on specific topics (vocational training, development of job skills and training needs, teaching methods and techniques, correlations between general education and vocational training, co-operation on research, migrants workers);

the second refers to the harmonisation of training levels. (See Official Journal of the European Communities, N C 81 12.8.971:5)

(16) The main aspects of the agenda defined in the context of the 'Social Europe' were:

1. Setting up of a real common employment market.
2. Absorption of underdevelopment and structural unemployment.
3. Improvement of living and working conditions.
4. Better terms of employment for women.
5. Integration of disabled people into working life.
6. Preparation of a European 'social budget'.
7. Collaboration between both sides of industry.
8. Setting up of a common programme of vocational training.

(See Bulletin of the European Communities, 11 (1972):72-74)

(17) See "Guidelines for a Social Action Programme", 1973.

(18) Several studies on training systems have been sponsored by the European Commission and by the European Centre [see the reports on apprenticeship in Italy (Giugni, 1976), in France (Boubli, 1976), in the Federal Republic of Germany (Muench, 1976); see also a cross-national report on vocational training systems by the ESC (1976) and the reports on individual countries published by the European Centre]. These studies were mainly descriptive and not policy-oriented; it is, therefore, difficult to envisage their contribution to the definition of an EC policy.

(19) See Chapter Three: Sect.

(20) The legal system set up by the Treaty of Rome includes regulations, decisions, directives and recommendations as instrument with different binding power. In the sector of vocational training, there have been very few decisions (Council Decision in 1963 concerning the general principles for a common policy and the Council Decisions related to the management of the ESF. Although not originally included in the EC legal system, the Resolution (a moral and political commitment of the European Council without any particular Commission's power in implementing it and without any sanction) has been used on several occasions.

(21) In an interview with an EC official several factors that affect the policy process have been pointed out. Among them, the relationship between Commission's officials and Commissioners (appointed by national Governments on the basis of a political selection and for a term of three years) and the rotating Presidency of the

European Council (six months) did not facilitate continuity of action. Moreover they may lead to a frequent change of priorities.

(22) One interviewee pointed out that a few EC officials in the DG V were former trade unionists; informal relationships between them and representatives of trade unions in the ETUC were facilitated. Sargent claims that in the area of employment and social policy trade union representatives were more likely to be involved, while the relationship between the Commission and the employers was stronger in the field of industrial policy (1985:245).

(23) In the early 1960's a "Memorandum about Community Employment Policy" was presented by the Italian Government (Bulletin of the European Communities, 6 1972:58-59).

(24) There are several documents on employment policies. Among them, see the "Rapport du Collège d'experts: une politique communautaire de l'emploi" (SEC 73 2592 final 6.7.1973) as an example of a contribution from national experts; see documents about the impact of the economic crisis and energy situation on employment (SEC 74 247 final 30.1.1974 and SEC 74 1358 final 2.5.1974) as an attempt to define the situation as a preliminary step in formulating policy proposals; see the "Commission's Communication to the Council on a programme of employment statistics (SEC 76 1400 2.4.1976) as an example of a practical proposal.

(25) See EEC, 1977:103-105.

(26) See for the discussion about the balance between training oriented and employment centred measures at the EC level, the report about a SCE meeting in Bulletin of the European Communities, 11 24.11.1977:34-5.

(27) Even a in country, such as Italy, receiving large amount of European funds, the working of the ESF was not beyond discussion. Italian interests were in favour of broad policy agreements on actions to be taken and the freedom of individual States to use resources accordingly. They complained about the fiscal vetting by the Commission of the applications and about the lack of final assessment. They pointed out the incongruity between ESF priorities and procedures and the national situation in terms of training needs, labour market and existing administrative structures (ISFOL, 1977:112-113)

(28) From an interview with an EC official.

(29) "Recommendation on Vocational Preparation", Official Journal of the European Communities, L 180-18 20.7.1977.

(30) See the Council Resolution on linking work and school (18.12.1979); the document on "Vocational Training in the 1980's" (COM 82 637 final 21.10.1982). In this documents there is evidence of a problem-oriented approach; no regulations, no prescriptive proposition, no rhetoric about harmonisation. By assessing the situation and 'borrowing' ideas from the member countries, these documents elaborate on policy perspective.

(31) The European Centre estimated the number of young people not in full or part-time employment or training and with no education or training qualification. According to the estimates quoted in an EC policy document and relating to 1978 twenty-four per cent of the young age group (16-17) were in that position; figures for Italy and the United Kingdom were respectively thirty-four and thirty-three. For the 17-18 group the figures were: forty-one for the EC, fifty-one for Italy and fifty-six for the United Kingdom ("Linking Work and Training for Young Persons in the Community" Annexe 2, COM 79 578 final 29.10.1979).

(32) "Resolution by the Council and of the Ministers of Education Meeting within the Council of 13 December 1976 comprising measures to be taken to improve the preparation of young people for work and to facilitate their transition from education to working life", Official Journal of the European Communities, C 308.1, 30 December 1976.

(33) This list included: education facilities for migrants; close relationships between educational systems in Europe; up-to-date documentation and statistics in education; co-operation in the field of higher education, teaching of modern languages; equal opportunities of access to education.

(34) Under the heading of transition the following areas were included: vocational preparation in the final year of compulsory schooling and in the post-compulsory period; specific actions for target groups (young migrants, young women, young physically or mentally disable); measures to cope with poor motivation; developments for guidance or counselling, improvements in initial and in-service training of teachers.

(35) According to one EC official it has always been very difficult for the EC institutions to take action in the field of education; people at school cannot be considered unemployed and, in addition, the Treaty of Rome does not provide for young people in the compulsory schooling age. The pilot projects were also seen as a breakthrough in this respect. Another EC official stressed the point that the approach (pilot projects) was an alternative to the

lack of sufficient resources for a generalised diffusion of the measures. There was no apparent plan to move from the piloting stage to an overall policy.

(36) The management of the project was carried out through a complex machinery with a system of external evaluation and the involvement of several training bodies and research institutes (IFAPLAN, 1980; Stronach and Weir, 1983).

(37) See "Reorganisation of available work young people and the labour market", Communication by the Commission to the Standing Committee on Employment", COM 82 641 final 14.10.1982.

(38) In our view the actions taken by the Commission furnishes evidence of a positive role of the Commission, contrasting with its "declining status" in the early 1960's (Taylor, 1982:74). While commenting on the lack of efficiency of the DG V (Coombes, 1970; Sasse, Poulet, Coombes and Deprez, 1977; Michelmann, 1978), Laffan asserts that "this is no longer true in relation to the ESF department in DG V; with the review of the Fund in 1977 and the subsequent improvement in its operation, morale among the officials dealing directly with the Fund has improved" (1983:396).

(39) Dalton and Duval (1986) have pointed out that in the UK there has been great volatility in opinion of the EC and that opinions were influenced by short-term events and not based on stable attitudes.

(40) In the BYC report about youth unemployment a stronger action by the EC is recommended; in particular it is recommended that: "the Social Fund should be opened up to all schemes concerned with the school to work transition period" (1977:XIII).

(41) The EC policy system makes the role of the Commissioners particularly relevant for the country they come from; in addition their tour of duty does not allow for long-term initiatives.

(42) In his report about the 1977 Conference on Youth Unemployment organised by the European Centre in 1977, Russell wrote:

"The 'great debate' on education instigated in this country by Shirley Williams, is really a European Debate; indeed the annotated agenda put down by the DES looks very much like that agenda agreed by the Ministers of Education of the Community member States when they met in Brussels on 29 November 1977." (1977:29)

(43) See Chapter Six.

(44) The tenth year ('Berufsgrundbildungsjahr') is a development that took place in the 1970's in the FRG. It consists of a year of general education on basic vocational education at the end of the compulsory school. See Von Domnanyi, 1978.

(45) See BACIE Journal for discussions and pieces of information about the allocation of ESF resources in the United Kingdom. In this country the organisation of industrial training through the ITBs made it difficult to operate ESF (Collins, 1983:78).

(46) Valentini, former general manager of ENAIP, the biggest, at the time, private training organisation, has recognised that in the 1970's the ESF resources were crucial in the survival of ENAIP as an organisation operating all over the country. The decentralisation of responsibility for training made it very difficult to finance a nation-wide body. In the UK the Department of Employment has an Overseas Division covering co-ordination of policy towards the European Community including the ESF (MISEP, 1984:3-5). An interview pointed out that particular attention was devoted to the search for resources and the EC was constantly under consideration.

(47) The system was different in Italy where, before 1973 public funds were available both to private and public bodies to be matched by ESF (ISFOL, 1974:192-199).

(48) Italy was putting pressure for a better use of the ESF resources but did not have a strong process of change to be assisted and supported. Any change in priorities in the EC or redefinition of guidelines was carefully looked at (see "EEC shake-up bits training" in Times Educational Supplement, 3.5.1985).

(49) This section has been developed taking into account a description of the role of the European Commission provided by an interviewee. According to his view: "The Commission has two main roles in the area of training. 1. The Commission can encourage the exchange of experience. The UK has a large experience in distance learning which can be useful for countries with large rural areas (Greece). 2. The Commission can act as a 'pressure group'; for example, we have now to move to a highly trained workforce. The Commission can exert pressure in order to increase the quantity and the quality of training."

(50) Wallace has defined the position of the EC with respect to the member countries in these terms:

"...in complementing but not displacing national activities or regional policies, in research and development, in industrial restructuring...the Community is neither supra nor international, but "extranational" neither above or below the nation state, but 'alongside'. Community politics and national politics can be mutually reinforcing, rather than the one necessarily undermining the other." (Wallace, 1982:65)

(51) In this context the assessment of the progress may well be a ritualistic action (Magnusson, 1978).

(52) See EC policy documents on "alternance" and the French law about alternance. Communication on linked work and training for young persons to the Council on 29.10.1979 and Council Resolution (18.12.1979) called for development of "alternance" and set out of guidelines for member states and for Community actions (demonstration project, technical support and exchange of experience). Finn refers to a EC document, presented as a 'school leavers charter' issued by the European Community - a document similar to a parallel MSC document. He says that the "groundwork on the document was done by a former member of the MSC staff, Ron Johnson, acting as a consultant" (1982a:325).

(53) See Regionalisation and ESF in Italy (ISFOL, 1974).

(54) A weak administrative structure is unlikely to get support unless wisely guided. See the use of ESF resources by the FRG in the early 1960's.

(55) The 1982 Annual Report on Social Policy reads:

"Community action in favour of young people has developed in parallel with action by the Member States and on the basis of the same principles." (Annual Report on Social Policy 1982, V-610-82 EN II:1)

(56) See the intervention of R.Faist, director of the European Centre, in Education Permanente, 57, 3 (1981):125. See also OECD, 1987 for a similar perspective applied to the OECD.

(57) The Centre had been long called for (ESC, 1976, 7; Saba, 1973:68). One of the first action undertaken by the European Centre was a survey on information needs, this was a month after its official opening (European Centre, 1977a). Russell sees the setting up of the European Centre as part of a strategy. He maintains:

"Although the Commission of the EEC has been firmly established for some while now, the

Governments and Departments of member States remain quite naturally somewhat suspicious of its recommendations. Its ability to influence action is therefore limited. Even quite reasonable reports and recommendations may not penetrate the suspicions. One technique used by the Commission is to establish fairly independent study and research institutes, so that work that is the result of impartial study of common problems may be received without the taint of the more directly political Commission in Brussels." (1977:29)

(58) The situation of the research is not without difficulties. An EC official commented in an interview:

"What often happens, is that we are approached by people who want to do research and sometimes we accept the proposal. My opinion is that we should have our own programme. Sometimes these sponsored pieces of research have no follow-up. The European Centre has a programme of research, but it is the result of negotiation among the members of the managing boards and so they are difficult to justify. See, for example, studies on education and training leave...they are not connected with any policy initiative."

(59) The European Commission will never recover the original place in the EC policy-making that it enjoyed in the early 1960's. However, the analysis of the initiatives taken in the area of vocational training call for further investigation of the networks gradually built up through advisory and consultative work, pilot projects, research teams. This invisible constituency gives to the European Commission a direct link with national policy developments. In carrying out the fieldwork we have been surprised by the level of personal knowledge among experts and representatives of training lobbies from different countries.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

9.1 SUMMARY

As all pieces of research, this study is an attempt to move forwards the frontiers of knowledge. Among the several schools of thought concerned with the nature of scientific investigation, the perspective of "understanding" has been emphasised in this thesis (Chapter One:Sect.1.5). This stance may be summarised in what Giddens defines as the task of sociology; he says:

"Sociology...deals with a universe which is already constituted within frames of meanings by social actors themselves, and interprets these within its own theoretical schemes."
(1982:162)

Vocational training as a policy sector has been the field of investigation in this thesis and the youth training programmes, adopted in the second half of the 1970's in France, Italy and United Kingdom, have been the focus of interest in the case study.

In Chapter Two the uncertain boundaries of vocational training as a policy sector were considered. The assumption of this thesis is that policy-making is mainly a matter for promotion and management of interests, agenda-setting (Lukes, 1974) and for consensus-building among interest groups. A contextual analysis of vocational training was conducted. The cultural and structural determinants of the policy sector under scrutiny were depicted, the Government's involvement in the area was examined and the complex web of policy-making was disentangled.

In concentrating upon the youth training programmes, it was necessary to consider national and international

factors and to discuss the 'national uniqueness approach' based on the persistence of long-standing national patterns; these programmes seem to support evidence of 'common trends' and commonalities. In Chapter Three a few sources of influence, both at the European level and at the international one were identified. 'Common national trends' were viewed in terms of 'parallel actions' in Chapter Four. In addition, in the same chapter, some factors that made parallel actions more likely to occur were pointed out

The four Chapters of Part Two presented the empirical findings. Chapter Five investigated how the long-established pattern of industrial training came under threat in the United Kingdom as a training formula and was bypassed by new "universal training for young school leavers" (Ryan, 1984).

The Italian Government's response to youth unemployment was the focus of analysis in Chapter Six. The Italian case exemplified the lack of coherence between the content of the decisions taken and the scale of the implemented measures; the political impetus that led to an innovative piece of legislation being introduced, was not matched by a similar strong effort in the implementation process. Chapter Seven dealt with training measures adopted for the young in the framework of the National Employment Pacts in France. In a highly organised system of initial and continuing training, the Employment and Training Contracts opened up a new field of action: initiatives taken were based not on a school-type of training, but on a combination of work and training. To what extent and how vocational training may become a policy issue at the European level were the themes of Chapter Eight where two main rationales - parallel actions by the EC institutions and cognitive mobilisation - of the EC policy were identified. The

concluding sections at the end of each chapter summarised the main findings.

This final Chapter aims to: (a) identify some policy diversities and similarities; (b) present two basic modes of the policy process in the area of vocational training; (c) discuss the theoretical relevance of some basic assumptions of the study carried out; (d) comment on the salience of the notion of parallel action for cross-national investigations; (e) point out some policy implications of the work done; (f) add a few remarks about further research that could be undertaken.

The limitations of this piece of research have to be taken into account; they are of three types. First, this thesis did not intend to provide a full account of vocational training policies. The lack of research in this field has necessitated a broad and explorative approach to the area; the aim was to work out a few middle-range generalisations developed from suggestions in seminal works (Stringer and Richardson, 1982; Anderson and Fairley, 1982). Second, as far as theoretical interest is concerned, this attempt constitutes a preliminary exploration. While analysing a specific case - the youth training schemes - we have tried to build up some conceptual insights, in particular the notion of parallelism. This notion needs to be further refined and revisited. Third, the geographical and substantial scope of the fieldwork is far from being adequate as the basis for a grand theory. In addition, training provision in Japan and in the United States are interesting areas for investigation and comparison (Reubens, 1982; IMS, 1984).

9.2 POLICY SIMILARITY AND DIVERSITY

The justification for the decision to include an intensive case study was primarily methodological (Chapter One: Sect.1.4); the case study was intended to furnish insights complementary to those emerging from the existing literature which was examined in the first part of the research. The cross-national design required the choice of a case study that could lead to the analysis of policies in all the three countries and also at the EC level. The youth training schemes sufficiently satisfied this requirement and, moreover, confirmed the similarities among the countries already pointed out by a number of researchers.

In this section differences and similarities from a policy point of view will be considered. Such a presentation may appear simplistic; however, it helps us understand the complexity of the policy process.

In a contextual analysis, national determinants (see Chapter Two) of vocational training present very different features in the three countries. Without recalling the content of Chapter Two, reference will be made to the different cultural and structural backgrounds, to the differing status of vocational training in each Government's policy agenda and to the particular settlement of the training issues in terms of the relationship between trade unions and employers.

The youth training schemes emerged as measures to tackle youth unemployment and it is not possible to extrapolate them from this specific policy context. However, in looking for the peculiarities of the policy process relating to training without entering the area of employment and economic policies - well frequented by

economists and political scientists -, similarities in the policy process can be identified.

These similarities concern the issues and their definition, policy content and policy instruments and, to some extent, the policy process itself. These characteristics are also identified along the lines of the hypotheses listed in Chapter Four (Sect.4.3). These are:

1. Priorities in Policy Debate. In the presentation and definition of the youth unemployment issue, two priorities can be singled out: the call for immediate action ("there is work to be done") and the need for training. British school leavers, Italian "disoccupati intellettuali" (unemployed young people holding a diploma or a degree) were equally perceived as in need of specific preparation for work either because they were lacking of any vocational training or because of their lack of work-oriented education.

2. Explicit Policy Aims. Although it is difficult to identify the policy objectives of national policies, it is undoubtedly evident that the concept of a 'social guarantee' was something more than an abstract thought; several formulations of the need to provide for all young people a chance either for work, for training or for education were found in the national policy statements and in EC policy documents.

3. Policy Options. In the countries studied, as in others such as in the Federal Republic of Germany, an effort was made to enlarge the existing training opportunities, mainly through the apprenticeship system. An inventory of policy measures came to be known and special efforts were made by international organisations to provide it (OECD, 1978b; European Centre, 1978). However, criticism and a

general feeling of dissatisfaction about the current provision were voiced in the discussions about actions to be taken in a situation of rising youth unemployment figures. The need for something new and more efficient was widely felt among policy-makers and experts.

4. Policy Instruments. The link between school and work through a combination of both was the basic concept that inspired training measures; however similar to old institutions such as apprenticeship this could have appeared, this pattern was elaborated as an innovative and unprecedented solution bypassing the traditional arrangements. In this process, it is hardly possible to identify pioneering and follower countries (Chapter Three:Sect.3.2).

5. Programmes. (Chapter Three:Sect.3.5) The schemes were introduced in terms of special programmes (i.e. a particular package of legislation, organisation and resources); they were not supposed to be a substitute for the existing current provision. These programmes introduced new resource dependencies (Chapter Two: Sect.2.2) as alternatives to the existing ones (direct public funding; levy-grant system).

6. Target Groups. The youth schemes were oriented toward a particular group in need, but with national definition of such group. Young people were the clearly identified target of the initiative. Youth unemployment figures and the perception of the size of the phenomenon by policy-makers was decisive.

7. Implementation. The implementation of the schemes was not the reserve of a particular institution; private and public bodies operated in this area. In spite of national programmes, executive responsibilities remained dispersed among several policy actors. Private and public bodies

were mobilised under the umbrella of a centrally-funded programme; there was room for locally-built implementation structures.

8. Government's Action. The special programmes were operated on the basis of what we have called (Chapter Two:Sect. 3), a Government-sponsored market solution. It was not a responsibility of the school and the implementation was not completely left to market forces.

9. Political Consensus. During the period concentrated on in this analysis, issues relating to youth training were not highly divisive among political parties. The support which the largest political parties gave to the Youth Employment Act, the consent about the youth schemes expressed by political parties in the United Kingdom, and the policy continuity in this area after the Socialist Party took office in 1981 in France, point out that differing policy regimes are not necessarily incompatible with common training arrangements.

10. Cultural and Ideological Process. In the three countries it is possible to identify a type of ideological presentation of these measures. An ideology of vocationalism, a call for greater accountability of education to society, and criticisms of the traditional general education system were some of the themes.

11. Policy Communities. There was a rearrangement of the policy community. From the prevailing 'closed systems' (Anderson and Fairley, 1983) the policy arena was gradually invaded by other groups and interests building up new issue networks.

The similarities listed here concern basic features of the policy process; it would be naive to talk of common trends among the countries. It is more interesting,

instead, to notice how these policy similarities are encapsulated in particularistic contexts. The overall picture may be complex. Some basic sources of diversity in the actual policy process can be identified.

1. Policies in Context. It is the policy context in which training issues are dealt with that makes them appear unique in each country. Training aims often relate to general economic policy and to objectives which Governments pursue on education and employment policy. Political issues, such as the Conservative Government policy in the United Kingdom, economic and social issues, such as the deregulation issue in Italy or institutional issues, such as the setting up of special agencies and their relationship with the Government, all enmeshed training issues in a complex web, which is inevitably particularistic.

2. Policy performance was very different among the three countries and data presented justify this source of differentiation among countries. The Italian case clearly shows that the process of policy formulation (definition of the aims and their formulation) may differ from the implementation.

3. Long-term Policy. In spite of common phases in the 1970's (Chapter Three: Sect.3.4) long term developments are inevitably linked to each individual context. The impact of the youth programmes on the existing provision of training is very different. Moreover policy strategy, adopted by a Government reflects the dominant policy style.

Youth training was an episode that helps to disentangle the policy process and to identify several related dimensions of it; for each of these dimensions it is possible to pose the question of diversity or of

similarity in a cross-national exercise. Policies do not converge or diverge as a whole. The policy process is made up of several dimensions; each of these may present a peculiar configuration.

9.3 NATIONAL POLICY PROCESS AND COMMON ISSUES

What can be learned from the propositions formulated in the first part of this thesis and the findings of the fieldwork in the terms that have been summarised in the previous section? With respect to the nature of policy process in the vocational training area, some lessons were pointed out in several sections and interspersed in this study. Policies are determined by a set of contextual variables; policy decisions and broader policy objectives heavily influence training policies. Policy formation may, however, presents more similarities among countries than does policy performance. A few factors may be assumed as determinants of these similarities.

This section considers the distinctions which have emerged between two modes in the policy process; these are contrasted for analytical purposes in order to illustrate two logics of action that affect the way in which issues arise and the potential or actual interaction between national process and EC policy process.

The first mode is the particularistic mode and concerns policy processes well rooted in domestic political and social factors and which are understandable in their historical context. Issues are mainly relevant at the national level and tend to be linked to unsolved problems of current training arrangements; institutional

changes tend to be nationally-oriented. Fundamental decisions regarding the basic approach and policy implication on training of broader policy decisions can hardly be of relevance outside the national area. The regionalisation of vocational training in Italy (Chapter Two:Sect.4.1) is an example of a particularistic process whose salience was mainly domestic. The debate about day-release education concerned another particularistic issue (Chapter Five:Sect.5.2.1).

The output of this policy process in this mode tends to be stable and with regard to long-term decisions. Supranational initiatives are difficult to devise (Chapter Eight:Sect.2). Little room is left for co-operative learning and joint consultation among policy-makers operating in different countries.

The second mode relates to policy processes taking place at the same time in more than one country and stemming from issues that have common components. There are several issues that may be internationalised. (1) In this process there is room for co-operative learning among policy makers from different countries and for exchange of experience; some common operating procedures for handling issues are more likely to appear and inventories of measures are more clearly compiled. Policy instruments may include transferable measures and policy options appear. Short-term decisions are more involved; the policy process is more episodic. Youth training programmes adopted in the second half of the 1970's is an example of this second mode.(2) Policy makers are more likely to be internationally oriented.

Differences between the two modes are numerous. However, these are not to be seen as distinct categories, but rather as extreme points in a continuum. It is in the context of this second mode that parallel actions may

exist (these were defined as 'similar courses of action taken by a cluster of countries with dissimilar policy settings' (Chapter Three:Sect.2.2) as well as divergent policies (see the case of policy responses to economic recession).

Contrasting the two modes helps to identify the composite nature of the policy process in the vocational training area, anchored to tradition and challenged by present events and issues. The policy process is, from one side, constrained by the established institutional and structural patterns; from the other, it is frequently confronted with new demands and unprecedented issues. This may be at the basis of those opposing features we have referred to: policy inertia and radical change in the United Kingdom (Chapter Five:Sect.5.1) and political impetus and lack of implementation in Italy (Chapter Six:Sect.6.1).

This dualism also has a wide range of implications for EC action. In the first logic of action, there are few possibilities for the converging of national decisions and EC actions: the search for a common vocational training policy is more or less restricted to a rhetorical exercise of formulating broad general principles (European Commission, 1964) (See Chapter Eight:Sect.8.2). Issues at the national levels may be so different that a need for a EC initiative is hardly felt. EC policy instruments, as in the case of the European Social Fund in the 1960's, may even consolidate the system which exists in a country. In the second case, the logic induced by the internationalisation of the issues, allows for interaction and exchange, as this thesis has illustrated (Chapter Four:Sect.4.3.3). With respect to the general approach to EC policy process, this piece of research has shown that parallel actions and co-operative learning, as viable strategies for EC action, are more

likely to succeed when there are commonly defined issues than when issues are particularistic.

9.4. VOCATIONAL TRAINING, POLICY SECTORS AND POLICY ANALYSIS

This section discusses how the investigation carried out relates to current research and methodological issues in policy studies.

Conceptual frameworks developed by policy scientists tend to cover several situations and policy areas, sometimes to cross over national boundaries. In their search for "universals" policy scientists are bound to emphasise basic features of the policy process without regard to individual contexts. Jordan and Richardson (1979) and Ham and Hill (1982) present examples of this avenue. Many others maintain this approach: individual cases are for empirical applications of theoretical propositions or for working out generalisations to be tested. As a result, less attention is devoted to features of individual policy areas.

In this piece of research we have investigated the policy process in one area and concentrated on the peculiarities of the area itself. We started by stating that what "training" is about cannot be defined a priori, but is the outcome of a policy process (See Chapter Two:Sect.2.1). The problem of defining the meaning of "vocational training" brought us in medias res. The non homogeneous training provision in the countries under investigation was the background to this effort to depict the process of policy construction. This policy sector, however, was not easily identifiable as such. In Chapter

Two (Sect.2.5), vocational training was termed "a policy arena" requiring an hermeneutic reconstruction because the policy process is shaped by cultural views and constrained by structural factors. By focusing on a specific sector this thesis has gradually developed insights with a mutual contribution of the formulative part and the field work.

The investigation carried out has shown that the unaccomplished process of institutional differentiation and the variety of administrative settings cannot confine the process of policy construction to a clearly demarcated territory. Long-term developments in training policies include radical change and persistence of patterns (Richardson and Stringer, 1982). The lack of a long-established and large administrative structure makes the area subject to change and stresses the relevance of current policy issues. In the 1970's, youth unemployment fostered the creation of policy networks, altered policy agendas and supported new courses of action in the area of vocational training. Other issues such as the challenge to the training system by the new technologies (Sorge, 1981; Moon, Webber and Richardson, 1986) or the debate about decentralisation in Italy resulted or may result in the same sort of effect. As a consequence, as has seen in Chapter Five, Six and Seven there are no stable and permanent policy systems dealing with issues which occasionally develop. Issues themselves are determinants in the setting up of a policy system for dealing with them.

Several dimensions are affected by this process and the overall configuration of the area may differ greatly from one country to another; this is the current view spread through most of the literature about training provision in western countries. However, behind the scenes, this apparent "substantial differences" (Reubens,

1982) may provide surprising episodes where commonalities are self-evident.

The attention of this thesis has been focused on the youth training schemes (OECD, 1978b:80-81). There has been a large movement towards a greater Government responsibility for young people. An international report based on a survey of 25 nations states:

"... deferred entry into the world of work and lack of large-scale meaningful alternatives for older teenagers, have led OECD countries to assume greater responsibility for the whole age group." (1985b:125)

This choice had far-reaching effects on training and on training ideology. The relation between training and education was reconsidered (Perry, 1985) and a theory of vocational education was framed (Corson, 1985). The experience of the youth programmes could not be understood in terms of the existing patterns of vocational training.

The two aspects - the ever-changing policy territory and the role of single-issues - may help in understanding the lack of analytical interest by scholars. Studies tend to be centred on particular aspects and attempts to deal with the overall picture of the training policy area are unfrequent in the literature. Many descriptive surveys are compiled by national and international agencies; they however, are not analytical. Here lies the need, that has inspired this piece of research, for an understanding of how policies are defined and carried out. However, it must be emphasised that this area-focused interest does not undervalue the universal implications of the investigation. A few remarks about these aspects are discussed in the following part of this section.

It would be inappropriate to discuss the research strategy at the end of this thesis. It is, however, useful to comment on the views that have guided this work in the light of the current debate about research design in policy studies. Four aspects will be considered.

First, the choice of investigating an individual policy sector, as a research strategy, is justified with reference to the process of segmentation and sectoralisation of policy-making. Some scholars have pointed out the fallacy of a view of policy-making as a unique and homogeneous process. Policy-making exhibits strong sectoral tendencies: individual policy arenas are the focus for analysis and subsystem politics become relevant. Freeman writes:

"There are good theoretical and empirical reasons to believe that policy-making in advanced societies is largely carried out, within relatively stable and clearly demarcated issues arenas, subsystems or what I will call policy sectors." (1985:84)

This phenomenon of sectoralisation has been studied in several pieces of research (Heclo, 1978; Buksti, 1980; Dyson, 1982). According to this policy sector approach, the style of policy-making will or may vary significantly from one sector to another. The nature of problems and policy issues shapes policy options and outcomes.

Second, there is a need to consider policy as an independent variable. Very often a research design assumes policy as the result of the unique mix of economic, social, political and historical characteristics. An alternative view is that policy-making is not something that is caused so much as it is something that is done. The construction of vocational training policies takes place in particular structural and cultural settings, but the process is not just the result of the context. As has been seen in this thesis it

would not be possible to explain actions such as the youth programmes on the bases of existing cultural and institutional determinants.

Third, cross-national comparison is less a collection of nationally-based studies and more a framework for national studies. The policy sector approach suggests an interesting proposition: the possibility that policy-making in a particular sector will exhibit strong similarities whatever its national context. From this perspective there is room for identifying factors which lead to similarities of styles among nations. The emergence of new styles in social reform, the professionalisation of reform, the convergence on certain issues (pollution...), the limited range of alternative measures, the imitation process and the role played by international organisations are some of the factors and processes investigated in the specialised literature. This problem was dealt with in Chapters Two and Three and we shall come back to it in the next section.

Fourth, in a situation of advanced sectoralisation, policy-making includes attempts to link different sectors. The linkage of policy sectors is a process which has been recently studied (Moon, Webber and Richardson, 1986). This process could be seen as "co-ordinated rationality" or as a manifestation of symbolic action. Chapter Two frequently referred to this aspect while considering training policies as the result of policies pursued in more than one sector. It was also referred to the defining of the second order status of training issues (Chapter Two:Sect.2.5). Moreover the process of "drawing in" of training issues in broader policies (Chapter Two:Sect.2.4.1) was discussed.

These four aspects summarise the theoretical underpinnings of the research strategy of this thesis.

They are well-rooted in the current investigation and may provide useful guidelines for further research.

9.5 PARALLEL ACTIONS AND CROSS-NATIONAL STUDIES.

The first two chapters dealt with the construction of vocational training policies and national, European and international influences. Chapter Three faced the incessant problem of bridging the gap between nation-based studies and cross-national analysis. Attention was devoted to the concepts of particularism, convergence and parallel action.(3)

In comparative studies and in the related methodological debate (Elder, 1976) there is an endless controversy about commonalities and specificities and it is not easy to steer a middle course. The notion of particularism emphasises differences among countries and the persistence of national patterns. It refers to a residual part in ever-changing social systems. Sometimes a particularistic view is necessary for a cultural approach to contemporary complex social systems (Sorge, 1979) in order to avoid biased universalised views of contemporary societies.

Convergence theory has been successfully and extensively applied in the study of educational change and the development of education systems. It is sometimes also used in policy studies.

The notion of parallelism was introduced in order to cope with the problems uncovered by other conceptual paradigms. Parallelism was defined as a conceptual device for focusing on the similarity of national policies in

area where national particularism is dominant (Chapter Three:Sect.4.2). Reference was made to Nielsson who identified among the Scandinavian countries:

"...continuously expanding integrative behavioural codes of conduct among the participatory states and thereby expands the scope of common activities into an integrative network." (1978:275)

The youth training programmes studied in this thesis were the outcomes of parallel courses of actions adopted by those European countries under scrutiny. Because of the European diversity in training provision (Johnson, 1987:33-36), commonalities of goals, of policy instruments and, to some extent, of outcomes (Neave, 1980; Casey and Bruche, 1985; Johnson, 1987) were unusual in the area of vocational training and were largely unexpected. These were considered as an episode of parallel action. In Chapter Three we have identified a few facilitating factors or determinants of parallelism (Chapter Three:Sect.4.3).

The salience of this approach is even more apparent when consideration is given to the fact that conflict and functional paradigms seem to have failed to provide, in their search for universals, a plausible explanation of the differences among countries in the field of vocational training.

At this concluding stage of this piece of research the question may be asked as to how the outcome of this study relates to current investigations in the area of policy analysis. It would be inappropriate to look for an exhaustive answer or to pose global theoretical questions; it is useful instead to recall a few items that may help in understanding the factors that have been isolated and investigated and to link this study to recent developments in policy-making studies. First, some

clarification is necessary. In discussing and using the notion of parallel action, the analysis has relied more on policy processes (policy actors, pressure groups, government's policy, agenda setting, positions map...) than on the structures and settings in which these phenomena occur. Drawing from Giddens's it can be said that vocational training as a policy area is not "a pre-given universe of objects, but the universe produced by the active doing of subjects" (Giddens, 1976:160). This approach does not underestimate structural constraints. Social, cultural and organisational factors are contextual determinants of the policy arena, they define the territory of policy choice (Mayntz, 1983:138).

Second, a common ideological ground to training policies can be identified. Grubb (1985) has studied the nature of vocationalism and the extent to which it is related to several policy decisions. (4) Vocationalism is defined as "the orientation of education towards preparation for the labour market"; and more specifically "vocational solutions to educational and economic problems". This ideology is enmeshed in different ways with education theory and it has been differently interpreted in the past as in the present. The strength of this ideology derives from the "promise of vocationalism": it appeals to many groups, as a powerful ideology in the international context (Grubb, 1985:544) which may be strengthened by the process of cognitive mobilisation (Chapter Four:Sect.3.4.5) and co-operative learning. The transition from school to work, the setting-up of special programmes for young unemployed people are manifestations of vocationalism. This ideology is pervasive: unemployment is defined in terms of a lack of training; the provision of training for young people is beyond discussion; the need of a transition for a "better future" is barely questionable. Vocationalism as ideology is one of those "fundamental decisions" which

was referred to in Chapter One (Sect.2.2). It is of note that a theory of vocational education has become significant in the countries under consideration. Ideology is not the unique cotributory factor, but it provides a common denominator to several courses of action and inspires policy contents.

Third, the programme approach (Hanf and Scharpf (eds), 1978; Hjern and Porter, 1979; Rainey and Milnard, 1983; Rose, 1984) provides propositions which are useful in understanding the outcome of this study. The programme approach shifts the focus of analysis from policy formation and implementation to programme design (Maynz, 1983:124). Programmes as policy instruments are determinants of the policy process. They are more easily transferable than are global options; they may be flexible, short-term and adjustable measures. Programmes may be adopted at the international level without questioning global policy options. Moreover the programme rationale makes compromise possible; it does not imply a choice of grand policy patterns, e.g. "industry-based" or "school-based" training. A strategy of policy-making may be based on programmes (Casey and Bruche, 1985).

These three aspects - an analysis centred on the policy process, vocationalism as an undercurrent ideology, and a programme approach - suggest further insights for understanding the outcome of this study.

9.6 POLICY IMPLICATIONS.

From the beginning of this study a normative and prescriptive approach to policy analysis has been avoided; moreover the limitations of policy analysis for guiding policy-making are well known. As Weiss states:

"The policy-making process is a political process with the basic aim of reconciling interests not of implementing logic or truth."
(1977: 533)

This does not mean that the investigation carried out has no relevance for policy-makers. Several agencies have carried out applied research in the area of vocational training; the results, however, do not provide grounded suggestions for policy-makers.

It has not been the aim of this thesis to evaluate policy outcomes, although how Governments have identified problems and dealt with them have been ascertained. In these final pages a few points worth considering in relation to the management of complex policy-making and implementation processes are mentioned.

In the policy sector under scrutiny a "laissez-faire" philosophy and a "voluntaristic approach" were identified and there is a variety of positions which can be taken by Governments on training issues. This makes the problem of non-decision crucial. Several Chapters mentioned episodes of policy failure and of implementation deficit (See in particular Chapter Six:Sect.6.3). Some such cases are very important. The provision for "day-release education" in the United Kingdom, included in the 1944 Education Act, remained largely unaccomplished. In Italy, training programmes for apprentices were not set up by regional bodies during the first half of the seventies. The failure of the Youth Employment Act in 1977-1980 to be fully implemented was referred too. Wedell (1982) discussed the failure of a "common vocational training

policy" as it has been advocated at the EC level (See Chapter Eight:Sect.8.2)

There are several reasons for inertness and non-decisions. First, the lack of a nation-wide bureaucratic system prevents consistent and permanent action in the long-term. The provision of training is not always institutionalised and interests are dispersed and scattered. The setting up and the subsequent development of bodies such as the Manpower Services Commission in the United Kingdom made it possible to have a continuous and strong effort. Second, the gap between policy formulation and the delivery system or the implementation structure may be seen in terms of the limitations of political pressure. Youth unemployment has undoubtedly provided a source of political pressure. This, however, was not always enough for an effective action. Governments do not operate directly; they frequently have to use other policy actors. In Italy, for instance, it was possible for a Government minister to blame employers for the failure of the Youth Employment Plan because the Government was not supposed to play a direct role in the implementation of the measures included in the Act (See Chapter Six:Sect.6.2.4). Political pressure provides the necessary strength for taking action; it is not a guarantee for implementation. If the potential symbolic use of policies and the political pay-off of policy-making are considered, it is possible to see how easy policy formation does not necessarily coincide with a successful implementation process (See also Chapter Eight:Sect.8.2).

This study has not directly dealt with issues such as political feasibility or policy effectiveness; however, two mechanisms are worth considering in connection with these issues. First, it is evident that the process of programme design and implementation was not just a

technical matter; it proved to be a successful policy mechanism. In the second half of the 1970's all Governments had to face the need for sudden action against youth unemployment. Under "problem pressure" (Chapter Three:Sect.4.3) there was no possibility for long-term reform or for overall change. The quest was for immediate action and for a plausible policy in both the short and long-term. The ability to design programmes which were feasible in the short-term and plausible from the political point of view was paramount and crucial for the Governments. Second, policy contents were not defined once and for all, but were gradually identified, modified and revisited. In the process of the designing, launching and implementing of measures, an array of such measures was explored, a succession of solutions was discussed and introduced. The strategy adopted by Governments was common on one point: all the plans were based on a host of measures that were, at least in the case of France and the United Kingdom, periodically revisited and adjusted.

Both these mechanisms - the use of a flexible instrument such as a programme and the lack of one single decisive measure - helped the Governments in dealing with decision-taking in a turbulent time. Coping with uncertainty was the crucial requirement for policy-makers: the "humdrum" approach which centred on small scale programmes, and successive adjustments and terminations, could be viewed as a positive strategy in a context of growing uncertainty.

9.7 FURTHER RESEARCH.

This investigation has studied a relatively unexplored policy sector. A few seminal works have pointed out this

avenue of research, i.e. the policy study of vocational training. This approach differs from sociological (Offe, 1977), institutional (Schmidt, 1984) and economic approaches and is far from being a well-established avenue of research. As a policy sector, vocational training is not self-evident; several problems of definition and of comparability remain to be solved. "Education for work" (Kerschesteiner, 1913) has been implemented in a great variety of patterns, formulae and processes. In this thesis, however, it has become apparent that this policy sector is worth investigating from the point of view of those middle-range generalisations which concern the policy process (Chapter One:Sect.1.5).

The development of this field of research is a necessary way towards a better understanding of the construction of vocational training policies. Further research efforts may be centred on the evolution from emergency measures to permanent measures in youth training developments and the policy implications of this process. This pattern has been pointed out in this piece of research, but has not been fully investigated. From a broader perspective, the approach developed for the study of the youth training programmes - parallel national actions - may be applied to other adjacent areas and issues and further discussed.

From a methodological point of view this thesis has been a preliminary exploration. A great deal of comparative work needs to be done. A comparative research design does not imply the rejection of the national case study method. A comparative analysis of vocational training policies in addition to the study of cases has to develop propositions which account for commonalities and discrepancies among countries and for the interaction

among countries. This thesis is intended to be a step forward in this direction.

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APPENDIX ONE

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

1. These notes refer to the development of this piece of research and summarises sources, data and techniques used in the fieldwork.

2. At the beginning of the study, background work was done. It led to a preliminary research note, to four introductory papers about vocational training policies in France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the Federal Republic of Germany. A short outline of EC vocational training policy was also compiled.

3. The empirical part of the study is based upon policy documents, media documents (from newspapers, magazines etc.) and interviews with informed persons. The same kind of sources were used in the fieldwork carried out in the three countries, France, Italy and the United Kingdom.

4. Primary sources: Archives (Parliament, various organisations); miscellaneous unpublished materials; interest group publications; publications of political parties; constitutional and legal documents; EC publications.

France: Journal Officiel (Assemblée Nationale; Documents; Débats Parlementaires. Documents issued by the Commissariat Général du Plan and by the Conseil Economique et Social).

Italy: Gazzetta Ufficiale; Atti Parlamentari.

United Kingdom: Official Journal. Parliamentary Papers.

European Community: Official Journal of the EC; Documents of the European Commission (COM Series and SEC Series); ESC Documents.

Secondary Sources (journals, newspapers, books; unpublished dissertations; journal articles):

France: La Documentation Française. Liaisons Sociales. Documents by ADEP, CEREP, Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi. Droit Social. Economie et Statistique. Actualité de la formation permanente. Le Monde. Le Monde de l'Education. Express. Syndicalisme CFDT Hebdo. CFDT Aujourd'hui. CGT Information Le Peuple (CGT). Force Ouvrière-Hebdo (CGT-FO).

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United Kingdom: Documents and reports by Department of Employment, Department of Education and Science, Manpower Services Commission. Documents and publications by BACIE, Youthaid. The Times. The Times Educational Supplement. The Economist. New Society. TUC Congress. CBI Education and Training Bulletin. Documents by Industrial Training Boards.

European Community: European Community Bulletin. Social Europe/Social Report. Publications by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Vocational Training Bulletin.

5. Thirty-five interviews were conducted and have provided non-documentary data. These included experts and knowledgeable persons (administrators, policy-makers, educationists) from the three countries under scrutiny (France:, Italy;; the United Kingdom:) and from the EC setting (). The European dimension was a topic also explored in the interviews at the national level. A list of items for use in the interviews was compiled as it follows:

Areas:

1. Government's Policy (youth schemes)
 - 1.1 Political Factors
 - 1.2 Government's Objectives
 - 1.3 Salience of Training
2. Unemployment Policy
 - 2.1 Origin of the Youth Schemes
 - 2.2 The Young Unemployed as a Target Group
 - 2.3 Unemployment Issue and Training Issue
 - 2.4 Training as a Priority in the Youth Schemes
 - 2.5 Policy Rationale and Programme Implementation
3. Training Interests
 - 3.1 Education and Training Lobbies
 - 3.2 Trade Unions
 - 3.3 Employers
 - 3.4 Governmental and Non-governmental Bodies
 - 3.5 Ways of Intermediation among Interests
4. Youth Schemes and Training Policy
 - 4.1 Youth Schemes and Apprenticeship
 - 4.2 Policy Differences (early 1970's and late 1970's)
 - 4.3 From Temporary to Permanent Programmes
5. European and International Factors
 - 5.1 Government's Interest in EC action and attitude
 - 5.2 EC Vocational Training Policy
 - 5.3 The European Dimension in Domestic Decisions
 - 5.4 International Comparison and Co-operative Learning Process

Similar questionnaires were designed for the interviews carried out in the three countries. These were translated in the respective languages. They are included in Appendix Two.

6. In the course of this study contacts have been established and visits made to the following bodies:

1. European Commission, Brussels (Main Library; Directorate V - Documentation and Information Service);
2. Economic and Social Committee, Brussels;
3. European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Berlin;
4. International Institute of Management, Berlin;
5. BundesInstitut für BerufsBildungsforschung, Berlin;
6. BundesAnstalt für Arbeit, Nürnberg.

APPENDIX TWO

QUESTIONNAIRES

UNITED KINGDOM

YOUTH SCHEMES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY IN THE UK 1975-1979

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The present list of questions is intended to be a "flexible guide" for exploring policy-making processes related to special measures for young people adopted in the UK during the period 1975-1979. I hope this will be a useful guide for my informal talks with people involved in this policy area.

The questions cover a wide range of topics and each informant is asked to discuss those which are closest to his/her expertise.

UNEMPLOYMENT POLICY

1. What was the origin of "work experience" and "vocational preparation" as policy perspectives?
How did the schemes based on these perspectives originate?
2. Why did the 16-18 year old become the target group of the youth unemployment policy?
3. Why did training and vocational preparation become a priority whereas employment measures lessened in importance?
4. Was youth unemployment gradually dropped from the explicit policy agenda and replaced by the training and vocational preparation issue? If so, why?
5. To what extent has there been a shift of focus from the rationale and aims of policies to programme implementation?

YOUTH SCHEMES AND TRAINING POLICY

6. How do you explain the transition from short-term measures to more permanent ones (from WEP to YOP and to YTS)?

7. Why did youth schemes rather than apprenticeships emerge as forerunners to reform of transition from school to work?

GOVERNMENT POLICY

8. What political factors led the Government to a direct response to unemployment, i.e. to adopt special measures and, among them, youth schemes in the field of job creation, work experience, training and employment subsidies ?

9. What were the political aims of the youth schemes (JCP, WEP, YOP)? How did they relate to the Government policies on employment, education and training?

TRAINING INTERESTS

10. What have been the main political consequences of tripartism, as a way of intermediation between the Government and non-governmental interests, on youth programmes and training policy?

11. How did the education and training lobbies influence the development of the youth schemes?

12. Did the "Great Debate" philosophy affect the youth schemes? If so, to what extent?

13. What factors account for the Manpower Services Commission pivotal position both in policy-making and in policy-delivery?

14. For what reasons did the TUC promote and support youth schemes (e.g. WEP and YOP) whereas some unions opposed them?

15. How do you explain the mixed response from employers to youth schemes? Did the youth programme meet some policy objectives of employers?

ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

16. Did the investigation of foreign experience contribute to the development of youth training?

17. Have you evidence of a process of cross-fertilisation of ideas among countries facing common problems (youth unemployment)?

18. Did the Manpower Services Commission co-operate with similar institutions in other countries?

THE INTERNATIONAL FACTOR

19. Was Britain a reluctant European in the area of "common vocational training policy"?

20. What was the role of the EC in vocational training from the point of view of Britain?

22. What lay behind Callaghan's search for EC action on unemployment in 1976?

23. What did Britain get in relation to unemployment at a time when it had the EC presidency?

24. Did Britain contribute to the EC policy development in the area of training for young people?

25. What influence did ESF (European Social Fund) subsidies play in British programmes? What were the political implications of the financial assistance by the ESF?

ITALY

I PROVVEDIMENTI PER L'OCCUPAZIONE GIOVANILE (LEGGE N.285.1977)

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Il presente elenco di domande intende fornire una guida flessibile, da utilizzare nelle conversazioni con esperti e "policy-makers", per l'analisi del processo di decisione politica che portò, nella seconda metà degli anni 1970, all'adozione di misure speciali per l'occupazione giovanile in Italia.

Le domande riguardano un'area molto ampia di problemi; ogni interlocutore è invitato a discutere quegli aspetti che più sono vicini alla propria competenza scientifica e professionale

LA LEGGE N. 285. 1977

1. Quali fattori politici spinsero il governo a predisporre in tempi relativamente brevi e con insolita solerzia un intervento di carattere straordinario a favore dell'occupazione giovanile?

2. A Suo parere, si possono individuare collegamenti tra la Legge n.285.1977 ed altri interventi che erano in fase di preparazione in campi adiacenti nello stesso periodo (ad esempio, la riforma del collocamento, la legge-quadro sulla formazione professionale, la riforma della scuola secondaria)?

3. Ritiene che ci fossero nell'iniziativa governativa (la "legge-giovani") obiettivi di medio o di lungo termine? seppur non esplicitati, al di là dell'esigenza immediata di dare una risposta urgente al problema dell'occupazione giovanile? Se sì, quali?

LA DISOCCUPAZIONE GIOVANILE

4. Ebbero influenza sull'adozione di misure urgenti per l'occupazione giovanile e sul loro contenuto le analisi economiche e socio-politiche allora correnti, sulla disoccupazione giovanile in Italia?

5. Quali sono le radici (ideologiche, culturali, politiche) dell'avviamento al lavoro come prospettiva di intervento volta a favorire la transizione dalla scuola al lavoro?

6. Lei è d'accordo nel ritenere che il ruolo attribuito alla formazione professionale in una legge rivolta ad incentivare direttamente l'occupazione dei giovani sia stato marginale ?

I CONTRATTI DI FORMAZIONE E LAVORO

7. Qual è, secondo Lei, l'origine dei contratti di formazione? Esistevano precedenti nel contesto italiano? E' documentabile l'influenza di esempi stranieri?

8. In quali termini i contratti di formazione rappresentavano negli anni in cui fu varata la Legge n.285.1977 modelli diversi o alternativi rispetto alla corrente organizzazione della formazione professionale?

9. Lei ritiene che i contratti di formazione vennero introdotti come misure transitorie o, già allora, c'era una implicita considerazione di essi come modelli da rendere permanenti per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale? In quest'ultimo caso, da parte di chi?

10. Quali fattori impedirono o resero difficile un maggior sviluppo dei contratti di formazione nel periodo di attuazione della "legge giovani"?

L'ORGANIZZAZIONE DEI GRUPPI DI INTERESSE

11. Si può parlare di una concertazione tra il governo e le "parti sociali" nella fase di predisposizione dei provvedimenti per l'occupazione giovanile?

12. Quali furono nel 1976-1977 le maggiori divergenze tra i partiti politici a proposito dell'intervento a favore dell'occupazione giovanile?

13. Qual è stato il ruolo svolto dal Ministero del Lavoro sia nella fase di elaborazione dei provvedimenti sia nella fase attuativa della Legge n.285. 1977?

14. Qual è stato l'apporto dei sindacati alla predisposizione della Legge n.285. 1977? Ritiene che l'intervento delle organizzazioni sindacali sia stato determinante nella fase attuativa della Legge? Se sì, perché?

15. A Suo parere, i provvedimenti adottati dal governo hanno accolto le richieste avanzate dagli imprenditori per l'occupazione giovanile? Come spiega la partecipazione e/o non partecipazione degli imprenditori all'attuazione della Legge n.285. 1977?

16. Come le Regioni hanno assolto ai compiti loro attribuiti dalla Legge n.285, in particolare per quanto riguarda la formazione professionale?

17. Ritiene rilevante il ruolo di organismi, quali l'ISPOL od altri istituti di ricerca e/o formazione, nella definizione delle linee di intervento per l'occupazione giovanile e nella successiva applicazione della "Legge giovani"?

18. E' possibile individuare l'influenza avuta da esperti (accademici e non) nella messa a punto dei provvedimenti?

19. In che misura il dibattito politico e culturale sviluppatosi durante gli anni 1970 sulla "questione giovanile" (lacune del sistema scolastico nella preparazione al lavoro, lavoro manuale e lavoro intellettuale, disoccupazione intellettuale) ha avuto un peso nella elaborazione di misure per l'occupazione giovanile?

I FATTORI INTERNAZIONALI

20. Lei ritiene che nella predisposizione delle misure per l'occupazione giovanile si siano tenuti presenti gli interventi adottati o in discussione in altri paesi europei (Francia, Regno Unito) ed extraeuropei (Canada, Stati Uniti)? Se sì, quali le evidenze?

21. Ci sono stati significativi contributi, da parte italiana, alla elaborazione delle iniziative della CEE a favore dell'occupazione giovanile nella seconda metà degli anni 1970? Se sì, quali?

22. Lei ritiene che la disponibilità di finanziamenti del Fondo Sociale Europeo abbia influito sulla adozione e sulla attuazione di particolari misure per l'avviamento al lavoro dei giovani in Italia? Potrebbe esemplificare?

23. Quale impatto hanno avuto, a Suo parere, i progetti CEE sulla transizione scuola-lavoro nel contesto italiano?

FRANCE

CHOMAGE DES JEUNES ET FORMATION PROFESSIONNELLE
1975-1981

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Le but de la recherche est l'analyse, du point de vue politique, des mesures de formation adoptées par le Gouvernement français (1975-1981) contre le chômage des jeunes, et des implications de ces mesures pour les politiques de formation professionnelle.

La liste suivante de thèmes se propose de servir de guide pour les conversations avec experts et "policy-makers" dans ce champ politique.

Le terrain de recherche est assez vaste; les conversations se limiteront aux thèmes qui s'approchent de plus à l'expertise - scientifique et/ou professionnelle - des personnes contactées.

1. Facteurs politiques qui ont portés le Gouvernement à l'adoption des mesures spéciales pour les jeunes à la recherche d'un premier emploi.
2. Liaison entre la politique économique du Gouvernement et les actions pour les jeunes.
3. L'importance des mesures de formation ("stages", "contrats emploi-formation") dans le contexte des mesures pour les jeunes.
4. Conflits entre les partis politiques sur les priorités et les instruments de la politique du Gouvernement contre le chômage des jeunes.
5. Rôle et intérêts des organisations patronales dans la définition et réalisation des actions de formation des jeunes.
6. La position des organisations syndicales sur les actions entreprises en faveur des jeunes, en particulier à propos des contrats emploi-formation.
7. La concertation (ou l'absence de) entre les organisations représentatives des employeurs et des travailleurs (Commission du plan; Pactes nationaux pour l'emploi).

8. Rôle des différents Ministères (Education, Travail, Affaires Sociales) et formes de coordination.
9. Les formateurs (enseignants titulaires de collège or recrutés par les employeurs) comme groupe de pression.
10. L'influence d'autres groupes de pression et de média.
11. Le rôle joué par les experts (économistes, éducateurs, planificateurs...).
12. La formation au service de l'emploi: le changement des priorités dans la formation continue.
13. Mutations au niveau idéologique (crise de l'école; valorisation du travail manuel).
14. Les contrats emploi-formation: mesures temporaires or modification de structure ?
15. Influence des expériences étrangères (e.g. canadienne, britannique).
16. L'utilisation du Fond Social Européen pour les actions en faveur des jeunes.
17. La contribution française à la définition de la politique de la Communauté Européenne en matière de chômage des jeunes.
18. L'impact des programmes communautaires tel que le projet "Transition de l'école à la vie active".

ANNEXE THREE**INFORMANT TECHNIQUE AND CROSS-NATIONAL POLICY STUDIES**

1. INTRODUCTION.

The informant approach is a research technique based on asking people to act in an informant role, i.e. to observe and articulate the social reality (or some aspects of it) for the researcher. It is a common practice in the analysis of policy-making processes to interview people directly involved in it. However, in this context, the distinction between "informant" and "respondent" has not been explicitly discussed neither fully exploited.

The purpose of this note is to outline some methodological issues regarding the investigation of a policy by using informants, defined, broadly speaking, as people, directly involved or not in the policy-making, asked to take the part of observer (as opposed to the role of "reacting participants").

We shall (a) refer to the development of the informant technique (IT from now on) and to its main methodological problems; (b) discuss the adoption of such a technique in policy studies and (c) list some of the technical problems we have been confronted with in designing our exercise of cross-national investigation.

2. THE INFORMANT TECHNIQUE.

The informant technique (Seidler, 1974) traces back to the early stages of the antropological research (Boas, 1987; Malinowski, 1927): the informant approach was

largely used as integral to participant observational studies or for collecting information "on a broken culture whose members no longer function as a living society" (Mead, 1953). In 1940 Osgood (1940:51) noted that "the basic factor in doing successful ethnography is... to find good informants".

During the 1940's and the 1950's the attention was centred on the scrutiny of the reliability and validity of the IT and some efforts were made in order to find out devices to cope with the technique's bias.

An important change came about in the 1960's and the 1970's: the use of informants emerged from the participant observation setting and was adopted in survey-based studies, in community studies, in cross-national surveys (Glaser, 1966; Hyman, 1967) and in organisational studies. More recently, a quantitative informant approach has been developed too. However simple the principle may be, the level of sophistication reached by the technique is surprising (Seidler, 1974).

The "informant" has been defined by Paul (1953:443) as "an articulate member of the studied culture who enters into a more or less personal relationship with the investigator for a relatively long period of time". Accordingly, the IT, says Seidler (1974: 816) is "the reliance on a small number of knowledgeable participants who observe and articulate social relationship for the researcher".

The establishment of the IT as an autonomous research device and not a component of the participant observation, was clearly operated by Zelditch (1962) who

distinguished between "informant" and "respondent" in these terms:

"We prefer a more restricted definition of the informant than most of the fieldworkers use, namely that he can be called an 'informant' only where he is reporting information presumed factually correct about others rather than himself and his information about events is about events in their absence. Interviewing in the presence of the event is considered part of participant observation." (1962: 569)

The technique consists of asking contacted or selected persons to act in an informant role; it can be used to generate hypotheses as well as to test them, to obtain quantitative as well as qualitative data.

The reasons why the IT is used are basically: (1) it was generally accepted earlier as the most reliable way of knowing inaccessible cultures whether present or past; (2) it is possible a better understanding that survey analysts could achieve; (3) it is normally a more economical and feasible means of data collection.

Problems posed by the IT have been frequently examined: selectivity bias, sampling and representativeness, measurement and standardisation, reliability and validity (Campbell, 1955; Pennings, 1973). At the same time, techniques to cope with them have been devised. They include: recruiting "representative, reflective, articulate and personable informants (Vidich and Bensan, 1954), using multiple informants and standardised interview situations (Merton, 1947), adopting general principles of corroboration, consistency and probability (Mead, 1953), testing the quality of reports and checking the informant's competence (Kendall and Lazarsfeld, 1950).

3. INFORMANT TECHNIQUE AND POLICY STUDIES.

In this section we shall discuss some methodological issues concerning the transfer of the IT in the field of policy analysis by referring to the "rationale" of the study of policies, to the case study approach and to cross-national methodology.

There are many criteria for evaluating the appropriateness of a technique. It is sometimes assumed that certain methods are more suitable for specific areas and less for others and it is obvious that techniques developed in one area of investigation cannot be transferred to another area. However, the history of the methods used in social science presents examples of successful adoption and transfer of techniques; sometimes this has been a source of innovation. Moreover, there are techniques that are nowadays common patrimony for social scientists.

The IT has been used in very different areas and for the investigation of various themes; in these research settings the technique has remained the same, but it has been adjusted to the specific needs. In particular this development has changed the role of the IT in research design (complementary as in the participant observation, alternative to respondent-centred studies in the organisational analysis), the instrument to be used (e.g. the level of standardisation), the type of data (quantitative versus qualitative).

In this note we argue that the same adjustment process may take place for using the IT in policy studies. At first sight, policy studies seem to be very far from the empiricist tradition based on the assumption of a

"rational science of society" which has been dominant in social sciences. Policy studies tend to be focused on specific processes more than guided by impelling imperatives of reaching generalisations or testing hypotheses as it is in the empiricist tradition in social research; there are few risks of methodological feticism, theories are conceived as interpretative instruments or sources of concepts, quantitative approaches are marginal (with few exceptions e.g. quantitative content analysis).

In general terms, the underlying logic of policy studies is closer to the historical method: knowledge provided by such analysis is global, contextual and interpretative. The "how questions" prevail on the "why questions". By using the well known dichotomy opposing "sciences of society" to "natural sciences", we may say that the study of a policy is more based on the understanding pattern than on an explicative one.

This has far-reaching implications for the techniques that are used in the investigation of policy formation and implementation. In particular it accounts for the large number of case studies. The case study approach, in the different forms in which it can be organised, still governs the literature in policy studies. It represents a way of immersion in a specific situation by using different sources of information and by trying to co-ordinate the data in a well-grounded description of the situation. In this context it is current procedure to interview people directly involved in the policy-making process; the interview does not generally take the form of a standardised interview, it tends to be a focused one (Merton, Fiske and Kendall, 1956).

Whiteley and Winyard put it in these terms:

"...the best approach is to ask many questions, most of them contingent on the respondent previous answers and gradually build up a picture of the overall situation. This means a focused interview approach where the researcher takes up a series of themes probing in depth at each stage, rather than asking the same standard question to every respondent." (1983:7)

The researcher has a "creative" role: he knows the sources of information, has in mind some conceptual devices, collects pieces of information and quantitative data, tries to work out a plausible interpretation and, thus, "tells the story". The study of the policy process has something in common with the artwork as Giddens noted:

"The societal sciences are not the only field of endeavour whose object is to 'understand' human conduct; they share such an aim with literature and the arts." (1976: 149)

In this context, the IT has a supporting role: informants can be used as a first source of information or before compiling a questionnaire. The case study approach matches the need of a global and integrated knowledge of a set of events; it does not consent a full development of a cross-national study. A cross-national study requires some less time-consuming and workable approach than replication of national case studies.

A cross-national methodology can be seen as:

"an approach to knowing social reality through the examination for similarities and differences between data gathered from more than one country." (Elder, 1976)

In its substance this method is a traditional way of

approaching social reality since the inception of sociology as a science. Among the various types of cross-national methods two seem useful for our purpose: the first is the approach that focuses on national uniqueness and cross-national contrasts, the second the approach centred on cross-national similarities and cross-national comparability. The first is more likely based on the premise that social and political phenomena are discrete and ultimately idiosyncratic; the assumption of the second is that social processes cross over cultural, geographical and temporal boundaries.

In the field of vocational training policies, the first approach has been dominant and little attention has been devoted to use data gathered from more than one country in order to examine more general propositions (how does vocational training change? what is the role of 'professionals'? how much does the implementation process account for?...) with the aim of establishing cross-national generalisations. While the first approach leads to cross-national study by summing up national case studies, the second has broader implications for the methods.

First of all, a collection of case studies may not be a comparative exercise: the comparison of "totalities" is hardly possible. Any comparative effort has to limit to comparable variables or sets of variables. Unfortunately, as Almond and Verba point out:

"...in the social sciences the isolation of variables is difficult...most of the variables we attempt to isolate are completely meaningful only when considered in their contexts, but to compare complete contexts is not really possible. Is there any way out of this dilemma? The answer is 'no' if we are looking for a perfect solution but 'yes' if we are looking for a reasonable solution..." (Elder, 1976: 364)

Comparable variables are possible only with the definition of conceptual categories at general level; according to Elder:

"It is possible to counter arguments for national uniqueness and cross-national dissimilarity with arguments that if one uses sufficiently general level of categorisation, most unique phenomena can be fitted into categories of non unique phenomena and can be dealt with accordingly." (Elder, 1976: 216)

Moreover, a certain amount of comparability in the procedure is required: it means more standardised procedures in data gathering and data treatment.

These three requirements (comparable variables, sufficient level of categorisation and standardisation) provide a platform for a pattern of study of the policy process not based on the case study approach but on the investigation of a set of comparable variables defined at general level. In this perspective the IT may be exploratively seen as a viable and workable way of gathering data.

The use of informants in policy studies is not at all new, but it has not been recognised as such. Key participants, elites, leaders and experts have always been used as sources of information and asked to act in an informant role. The use of experts' opinions and views is probably the case nearer to those of informants: their contribution has always been considered with caution. Discussing, for instance, the role of Parliamentary Committees, S. and B. Webb drastically concluded that:

"of all recognised sources of information the oral 'evidence' given in the course of these enquiries has proved to be the least profitable." (1932:142)

A more positive attitude was expressed by Madge (1953) when he noted that:

"if properly approached...(the experts') opinions are themselves of great interest... they are highly informed opinions. The fact that an individual is prepared to give evidence probably implies that he will have taken the trouble to collect his thoughts on the subject and material to support his case... Background material obtained by pumping 'experts' can seldom be relied on by itself, but if properly critically amassed can provide invaluable check, confirmation and correction on the results of the field studies...if he really is an expert, steeped in his subject, he will probably have attained more insight into it than any outside investigator can ever hope to do." (1953:149)

In this section we have explored the methodological implications of a cross-national study in the field of policy-analysis and proposed the use of the IT in this context.

4. SOME PRACTICAL PROBLEMS.

A "discours sur la méthode" has to come to terms with reality: it implies to solve practical problems. The use of the IT in the context of a cross-national study faces four kinds of problems: the choice of "informants", the exchange researcher-informant, the organisation of the data collection and the problem of the quality of gathered data. Choosing informants is a three-step operation: (1) how to find them; (2) how to select them; (3) how to sample them. The sources for identify potential informants in a policy study may be the specialised literature, the political debate, the "invisible college" and the personal (direct or indirect) knowledge (snowball technique). For the selection, pragmatism constraints are equally decisive. It is not possible to have a random or representative sample (as it

is the case in a respondent-type approach): the "optimum" is a purposive sample based on the needs of the research (adequacy to the hypothesis, multiple informants, presence of alternative points of view...)

In the light of the tradition of the IT, the relationship between the researcher and the informant is not one-way, it is generally understood in term of exchange: people acting as informants are not just asked to provide available information but to contribute to find out new evidence and to explore for new evidence.

There are several difficulties (access problem, motivation, local sponsorship in the case of a cross-national study...) and the image of collaboration between researcher and informant has sometimes to be replaced by one of disharmony and conflict of interest. In order to have a more standardised procedure, an effort to isolate comparable variables and define them in conceptual terms is needed. For the purpose of the data gathering at the national level a nationally-oriented list of questions may be useful. Instead of an intensive, unstructured interview, common in the case study method, a guided interview on a list of items is a good suggestion.

In policy studies the main task is to make things understandable, to facilitate the comprehension of events, to shed light upon complex processes; consequently the kind of outcome likely to be obtained by interviewing informants are: factual information (evidence), identification of supplementary sources, suggestions for answering some questions, elaborated hypotheses, speculations, reformulations of the questions and discussion of alternative views. These kinds of data cannot take a quantitative form, but there is still a problem of organising them.

The quality of the technique is based on the quality of data collected. Validity, reliability and accuracy are the used criteria for evaluating data. The validity refers to the quality of "well-grounded, defensible data". There is no antidote for assuring a satisfactory level of validity, but some devices can help to improve it, in particular the check of the informant's competency (measure of knowledgeability), the test of the quality of the reports and the control of potential sources of bias.

The problem of accuracy is related to the level of specific knowledge and information provided; this may be a main problem in a cross-national study, due to the different levels of available knowledge in different countries.

The criteria of reliability may be dealt with in two ways. First of all, inter-informant reliability provides a useful information, but also the divergence in this context is of major interest for the investigator as it points out the less known and more conflictual aspects of the events under investigation. Second, the inter-method reliability points out a crucial aspect in the use of informants: the results of the analysis of policy documents and outcomes of the informant technique provide basic data that the researcher has to analyse and interpret in their convergence and in their divergence. This kind of process is, perhaps, less part of the methodology as explicit statement about procedures and more embodied in the day by day research work.

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